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Bampton lectures





*The principal Objections against the Doctrine of the Trinity,
and a portion of the Evidence on which that Doctrine
is received by the Catholic Church, Reviewed,*

IN

EIGHT SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD,

IN THE YEAR MDCCCXXXVII,

AT THE

LECTURE

FOUNDED BY

THE REV. JOHN BAMPTON, M.A.
CANON OF SALISBURY.

BY

THE REV. THOMAS S. L. VOGAN, M.A.
OF ST. EDMUND HALL;
VICAR OF POTTER HEIGHAM, AND CURATE OF WESTON LONGVILLE,
NORFOLK.

OXFORD,

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR:

SOLD BY J. H. PARKER; J. G. AND F. RIVINGTON, LONDON;
AND J. STACY, NORWICH.

1837.

TO

THE REVEREND THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

AND TO

THE HEADS OF COLLEGES

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

THE FOLLOWING SERMONS

PREACHED BY THEIR APPOINTMENT

A.R.E.

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED.

EXTRACT
FROM
THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT
OF THE
REV. JOHN BAMPTON,
CANON OF SALISBURY.

— “ I give and bequeath my Lands and
“ Estates to the Chancellor, Masters, and Scho-
“ lars of the University of Oxford for ever, to
“ have and to hold all and singular the said
“ Lands or Estates upon trust, and to the in-
“ tents and purposes hereinafter mentioned ;
“ that is to say, I will and appoint that the
“ Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford
“ for the time being shall take and receive all
“ the rents, issues, and profits thereof, and (after
“ all taxes, reparations, and necessary deduc-
“ tions made) that he pay all the remainder
“ to the endowment of eight Divinity Lecture
“ Sermons, to be established for ever in the said
“ University, and to be performed in the manner
“ following:

“ I direct and appoint, that, upon the first
“ Tuesday in Easter Term, a Lecturer be yearly
“ chosen by the Heads of Colleges only, and by
“ no others, in the room adjoining to the Print-
“ ing-House, between the hours of ten in the
“ morning, and two in the afternoon, to preach
“ eight Divinity Lecture Sermons, the year fol-
“ lowing, at St. Mary’s in Oxford, between the
“ commencement of the last month in Lent
“ Term, and the end of the third week in Act
“ Term.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that the eight
“ Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be preached
“ upon either of the following Subjects—to con-
“ firm and establish the Christian Faith, and to
“ confute all heretics and schismatics—upon the
“ divine authority of the holy Scriptures—upon
“ the authority of the writings of the primitive
“ Fathers, as to the faith and practice of the pri-
“ mitive Church—upon the Divinity of our Lord
“ and Saviour Jesus Christ—upon the Divinity
“ of the Holy Ghost—upon the Articles of the
“ Christian Faith, as comprehended in the
“ Apostles’ and Nicene Creeds.

“ Also I direct, that thirty copies of the eight
“ Divinity Lecture Sermons shall be always
“ printed, within two months after they are

“ preached, and one copy shall be given to the
“ Chancellor of the University, and one copy to
“ the Head of every College, and one copy to
“ the Mayor of the city of Oxford, and one
“ copy to be put into the Bodleian Library; and
“ the expense of printing them shall be paid
“ out of the revenue of the Lands or Estates
“ given for establishing the Divinity Lecture
“ Sermons; and the Preacher shall not be paid,
“ nor be entitled to the revenue, before they are
“ printed.

“ Also I direct and appoint, that no person
“ shall be qualified to preach the Divinity Lec-
“ ture Sermons, unless he hath taken the degree
“ of Master of Arts at least, in one of the two
“ Universities of Oxford or Cambridge; and that
“ the same person shall never preach the Divinity
“ Lecture Sermons twice.”

The list of Bampton Lecturers, with their subjects, is here reprinted from Dr. Chandler's publication in 1825, and continued to the present time.

1780. JAMES BANDINEL, D.D. of Jesus College; Public Orator of the University. The author first establishes “the truth and authority of the Scriptures;—for the “authenticity of the history being acknowledged, and “the facts which are therein recorded being granted, the “testimony of *miracles* and *prophecies*, joined to the “excellence of the *doctrines*, is a clear and complete “demonstration of our Saviour's divine commission.”
1781. TIMOTHY NEVE, D.D. Chaplain of Merton College. “The great point which the author has principally at-“tempted to illustrate is, that well known but too much “neglected truth, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the “world, and the Redeemer of mankind.”
1782. ROBERT HOLMES, M.A. Fellow of New College. “On “the prophecies and testimony of John the Baptist, and “the parallel prophecies of Jesus Christ.”
1783. JOHN COBB, D.D. Fellow of St. John's College. The subjects discussed are; “an inquiry after happiness; “natural religion; the Gospel; repentance; faith; “professional faith; practical faith; the Christian's “privileges.”
1784. JOSEPH WHITE, B.D. Fellow of Wadham College. “A comparison of Mahometism and Christianity in their “history, their evidence, and their effects.”

1785. RALPH CHURTON, M.A. Fellow of Brasen Nose College. "On the prophecies respecting the destruction of Jerusalem."
1786. GEORGE CROFT, M.A. late Fellow of University College. "The use and abuse of reason; objections against inspiration considered; the authority of the ancient Fathers examined; on the conduct of the first Reformers; the charge of intolerance in the Church of England refuted; objections against the Liturgy answered; on the evils of separation; conjectural remarks upon prophecies to be fulfilled hereafter."
1787. WILLIAM HAWKINS, M.A. late Fellow of Pembroke College. "On Scripture mysteries."
1788. RICHARD SHEPHERD, D.D. of Corpus Christi College. "The ground and credibility of the Christian religion."
1789. EDWARD TATHAM, D.D. of Lincoln College. "The chart and scale of truth."
1790. HENRY KETT, M.A. Fellow of Trinity College. "The object of these Lectures is to rectify the misrepresentations of Mr. Gibbon and Dr. Priestley, with respect to the history of the primitive church."
1791. ROBERT MORRES, M.A. late Fellow of Brasen Nose College. On "faith in general; faith in divine testimony no subject of question; internal evidence of the Gospel; effects of faith; religious establishment; heresies."
1792. JOHN EVELEIGH, D.D. Provost of Oriel College. "I shall endeavour," says the learned author, "first to state regularly the substance of our religion from its earliest declarations in the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament, to its complete publication after

“the resurrection of Christ; secondly, to give a sketch
“of the history of our religion from its complete publi-
“cation after the resurrection of Christ to the present
“times, confining however this sketch, towards the con-
“clusion, to the particular history of our own church;
“thirdly, to state in a summary manner the argument
“adducible in proof of the truth of our religion; and
“fourthly, to point out the general sources of objection
“against it.”

1793. JAMES WILLIAMSON, B.D. of Queen's College. “The
“truth, inspiration, authority, and evidence of the Scrip-
“tures considered and defended.”
1794. THOMAS WINTLE, B.D. of Pembroke College. “The
“expediency, prediction, and accomplishment of the
“Christian redemption illustrated.”
1795. DANIEL VEYSIE, B.D. Fellow of Oriel College. “The
“doctrine of Atonement illustrated and defended.”
1796. ROBERT GRAY, M.A. late of St. Mary Hall. “On
“the principles upon which the Reformation of the Church
“of England was established.”
1797. WILLIAM FINCH, LL.D. late Fellow of St. John's Col-
lege. “The objections of infidel historians and other
“writers against Christianity considered.”
1798. CHARLES HENRY HALL, B.D. late Student of Christ
Church. “It is the purpose of these discourses to con-
“sider at large what is meant by the scriptural expres-
“sion, ‘fulness of time;’ or, in other words, to point
“out the previous steps by which God Almighty gra-
“dually prepared the way for the introduction and pro-
“mulgation of the Gospel.” See the Preface.

1799. WILLIAM BARROW, LL.D. of Queen's College. These Lectures contain "answers to some popular objections against the necessity or the credibility of the Christian revelation."
1800. GEORGE RICHARDS, M.A. late Fellow of Oriel College. "The divine origin of Prophecy illustrated and defended."
1801. GEORGE STANLEY FABER, M.A. Fellow of Lincoln College. "Horæ Mosaicæ; or, a view of the Mosaical records with respect to their coincidence with profane antiquity, their internal credibility, and their connection with Christianity."
1802. GEORGE FREDERICK NOTT, B.D. Fellow of All Souls' College. "Religious Enthusiasm considered."
1803. JOHN FARRER, M.A. of Queen's College. "On the mission and character of Christ, and on the Beatitudes."
1804. RICHARD LAURENCE, LL.D. of University College. "An attempt to illustrate those Articles of the Church of England which the Calvinists improperly consider as Calvinistical."
1805. EDWARD NARES, M.A. late Fellow of Merton College. "A view of the evidences of Christianity at the close of the pretended age of reason."
1806. JOHN BROWNE, M.A. late Fellow of Corpus Christi College. In these Lectures the following principle is variously applied in the vindication of religion; that "there has been an infancy of the species, analogous to that of the individuals of whom it is composed, and that the

“ infancy of human nature required a different mode of
“ treatment from that which was suitable to its advanced
“ state.”

1807. THOMAS LE MESURIER, M.A. late Fellow of New College. “ The nature and guilt of Schism considered with
“ a particular reference to the principles of the Reformation.”
1808. JOHN PENROSE, M.A. of Corpus Christi College. “ An attempt to prove the truth of Christianity from the wisdom displayed in its original establishment, and from
“ the history of false and corrupted systems of religion.”
1809. JOHN BAYLEY SOMERS CARWITHEN, M.A. of St. Mary Hall. “ A view of the Brahminical religion in its confirmation of the truth of the sacred history, and in its influence on the moral character.”
1810. THOMAS FALCONER, M.A. of Corpus Christi College. “ Certain principles in Evanson’s ‘ Dissonance of the four generally received Evangelists,’ &c. examined.”
1811. JOHN BIDLACE, D.D. of Christ Church. “ The truth and consistency of divine revelation; with some remarks on the contrary extremes of Infidelity and Enthusiasm.”
1812. RICHARD MANT, M.A. late Fellow of Oriel College. “ An appeal to the Gospel ; or an inquiry into the justice of the charge, alleged by Methodists and other objectors, that the Gospel is not preached by the National Clergy.”
1813. JOHN COLLINSON, M.A. of Queen’s College. “ A key to the writings of the principal Fathers of the Christian Church, who flourished during the first three centuries.”

1814. WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, D.D. Regius Professor of Divinity, and Canon of Christ Church. "An inquiry into the general principles of Scripture-interpretation."
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1816. JOHN HUME SPRY, M.A. of Oriel College. "Christian Unity doctrinally and historically considered."
1817. JOHN MILLER, M.A. Fellow of Worcester College. "The divine authority of holy Scripture asserted from its adaptation to the real state of human nature."
1818. C. A. MOYSEY, D.D. late Student of Christ Church. "The Doctrine of Unitarians examined, as opposed to the Church of England."
1819. HECTOR DAVIES MORGAN, M.A. of Trinity College. "A compressed view of the religious principles and practices of the age; or, a trial of the chief spirits that are in the world, by the standard of the Scriptures."
1820. GODFREY FAUSSETT, M.A. late Fellow of Magdalen College. "The claims of the Established Church to exclusive attachment and support, and the dangers which menace her from schism and indifference."
1821. JOHN JONES, M.A. of Jesus College. "The moral tendency of divine revelation asserted and illustrated."
1822. RICHARD WHATELY, M.A. Fellow of Oriel College. "The use and abuse of party-feeling in matters of religion."
1823. CHARLES GODDARD, D.D. Archdeacon of Lincoln. "The mental condition necessary to a due inquiry into religious evidence stated and exemplified."

1824. J. J. CONYBEARE, M.A. late Student of Ch. Ch. " An attempt to trace the history and to ascertain the limits of the secondary and spiritual interpretation of Scripture."
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1828. THOMAS HORNE, B.D. formerly Student of Christ Church. " The religious necessity of the Reformation asserted, and the extent to which it was carried in the Church of England vindicated."
1829. EDWARD BURTON, D.D. Regius Professor of Divinity, and Canon of Christ Church. " An Inquiry into the heresies of the Apostolic age."
1830. HENRY SOAMES, M.A. of Wadham College. " An Inquiry into the doctrines of the Anglo-Saxon Church."
1831. THOMAS WILLIAM LANCASTER, M.A. formerly Fellow of Queen's College. " The popular evidence of Christianity stated and explained."
1832. RENN DICKSON HAMPDEN, M.A. late Fellow of Oriel College. " The Scholastic philosophy considered in its relation to Christian theology."

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Discourses are part of a more comprehensive design, which I have had before me for some years. They are the result of much careful reflection: and I can state with perfect sincerity, that I have neither passed over any objection, which appeared to require notice, nor brought forward one argument, of the validity of which I was not, after severe and repeated examination, most deliberately convinced. The mystery of the Holy Trinity I have not presumed either to illustrate or to explain: but it has been my endeavour to render the doctrine as intelligible as may be to the most ordinary capacities.

Parts of the Sermons may be thought too diffuse; but it will perhaps appear, that an enlarged discussion of one leading point has enabled me to be the more brief on other points immediately connected with it. Thus, in the sixth Sermon, considerable space is occupied on John i. 1; but I conceived, that, having once come to a satisfactory decision on that text, little was requisite to be said on the cognate ones which follow.

It will be perceived, that I do not profess to give all the evidence of Scripture for the doctrine of the Trinity, but only an outline or general review of it. Many important passages, therefore, are omitted; such, particularly, as Phil. ii. 6. and Col. i. 15. which would have required a more extended notice than my limits seemed to allow.

It may also be observed, that, as it has been my aim to obviate the necessity of additional explanation, the Notes at the end will be found to be neither numerous nor elaborate, but to consist almost wholly of extracts, illustrative of some statements

in the text, without introduction or comment.

Many lengthened disquisitions might, indeed, have been added on various points touched on in the Sermons: but the volume would have been perhaps both too much increased, and less acceptable to general readers.

T. S. L. V.

Oxford, May 13, 1837.

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S E R M O N I.

JOB xi. 7, 8.

Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

THOUGH every Christian Church acknowledges, either expressly or virtually, that faith in the holy and undivided Trinity is of the highest importance, and of general necessity to salvation: yet there are many individual Christians, who appear to be insufficiently acquainted with the extensive and powerful range of evidence, on which the doctrine of the Trinity is established. To this cause, together with the pertinacious obtrusion, by the Unitarians, of objections which have been again and again answered, and of misrepresentations, which

have been as often exposed:—to the unceasing efforts of this body, aided by the latitudinarians and infidels of the day, in all ways, and in all kinds of publications, to undermine every thing in Christianity, which distinguishes it from “the religion of nature:”—to the want of sufficient reflection on the consequences which necessarily flow from the truth or falsehood of the doctrine:—and to the natural unwillingness of the heart, to subject itself to the test, which an acknowledgment of the necessity of a right faith and right motives, to the character and hopes of those “who will be saved,” must impose upon it:—may be attributed the hesitation, indifference, or aversion, sometimes entertained by members of our Church, as to the use of a creed, in which the importance and necessity of this doctrine are explicitly declared.

I propose, therefore, in the course of Lectures which it will be my duty to deliver from this place, first, to examine the leading objections which are made against the doctrine of the Trinity; secondly, to take

a general review of the evidence for this doctrine; and, thirdly, to vindicate the language of our Church in the creed to which I have referred.

The objections, with which an advocate of the doctrine of the Trinity has to contend, may be classed under two heads: the one head comprehending objections against the doctrine itself; the other, objections against the evidence adduced in support of it.

With the objections of the second class, however, we cannot professedly concern ourselves; since they fall within the province of the critic, rather than of the preacher: but yet, when we come to describe the evidence of the doctrine, it will be incumbent on us to justify the application we shall make of its individual parts, as they severally present themselves, from any objections which may require our notice. We proceed, therefore, to examine the leading objections which are urged against the doctrine itself.

The doctrine of the Trinity is, that “there is but one living and true God;”

and that, “in the Unity of this Godhead, there are three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost^a:” or, to use the description which an Unitarian writer^b gives of it, “that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, three equal Persons in the same divine substance, and yet that there are not three Gods, but one God.”

Against this doctrine it is objected, that it is mysterious and incomprehensible; that the fact which it states, of there being three Persons in one God, is impossible; that its very expression in words is self-contradictory; and, that it is opposed to the first principles of natural and revealed religion.

I. Of all these objections, the first is made with the least degree of thought: because it is made without any discrimination between the doctrine, and the fact which is the subject of that doctrine; and

^a Article I.

^b Belsham, Calm Inquiry, Lond. 1817, p. 330.

because a few moments' reflection on the meaning, application, or consequences, of the objection, would be its best answer. A thing or fact may be in the highest degree mysterious; and the proposition expressing such thing, may be as intelligible as can be desired for all needful purposes. That “God is,” or that “our bodies shall rise again from the dead,” are propositions level to the meanest understanding: while the Divine Being and the resurrection are subjects which exceed the comprehension of the most powerful.

As directed against the doctrine, then, this objection is untrue: for Socinians and Unitarians,—or, as the author of “The Apostolicity of Trinitarianism” has more accurately denominated them in common with the abettors of the other kindred heresies, “the Unipersonalists”—themselves being judges, the doctrine is both plain and intelligible. Every one can understand, sufficiently for all the purposes of faith, the meaning of the propositions: that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; that the

Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are three Persons, so distinct, that one cannot be the other, and yet so inseparable, that they are but one God. And the more we rest contented with the general idea, which every one may form, of the three Persons being one God; the more rational and scriptural will our faith be: for as the Scriptures are our only source of information on this subject, and as they do not afford any means of approaching to a particular conception of it; the more we look elsewhere for that information, and the more we strive to be “wise beyond what is written,” the less rational in this respect will be our conduct, and the less scriptural our conclusions.

But to the objection, as directed against the fact of a Trinity in Unity, the acknowledged mysteriousness and incomprehensibility of that fact, cannot give the slightest force. For, if it be a sufficient ground for unbelief in the Trinity, that it is mysterious and incomprehensible; then, there cannot be a sufficient reason for the belief of any other thing to which these epithets may be

applied: the objection depending wholly on the supposition, that nothing which is mysterious and incomprehensible, or, in other words, that nothing which is not, in all respects, plain and intelligible, is to be believed. And to what absurdity would this force us! Of many things, we know comparatively little more than the bare fact of their existence. “Nor,”—to use the words of Bishop Butler,—“can we give the whole account of any one thing whatever, of all its causes, ends, and necessary adjuncts.” Let us take, for instance, if it were but a grain of dust:—its mere existence is involved in mystery, and no man can comprehend how it was originally produced. The manner of its production, indeed, we call creation; but this is only removing the difficulty one step farther off, and referring us to that peculiar exertion of God’s infinite power, which, though it has given existence to ourselves and to all around us, the mind of man is so unable to discover or to conceive; that the ancient philosophers, who must be allowed to have

^c *Analogy*, I. ch. vii.

given full proof of the powers of reason, universally maintained the impossibility of any thing being made from nothing ; and described the world as having been formed by chance, by its own spontaneous motion, or by the energy of a co-eternal mind, out of previously existing and indestructible matter. Revelation alone^d either did, or could, inform us of the fact,—which, nevertheless, is still equally mysterious,—that all things in heaven and in earth were made out of nothing, by the power of an eternal, incorporeal, and all-perfect Being, who “ spake, and it was done ; ” who “ commanded, and it stood fast^e. ”

But it is not in this respect only, that the very dust of the earth can baffle the intellect of man : for though we may be able to measure the sides of its minutest visible particles, and may have ascertained many of its properties ; yet, who can say that he is acquainted with all its properties, or knows the true and ultimate elements of which it is composed ? There is, in truth, nothing, which we do in all respects

^d Heb. ix. 3.

^e Ps. xxxiii. 9.

understand; or which does not,—to use again the words of Bishop Butler,—“ immediately run up into something, which shews us our ignorance in it.” We are a mystery even to ourselves. The nature and generation of the soul: the manner in which the body and the soul mutually influence each other: the operations of the mind upon itself: the faculty of speech, by which we can make each other acquainted with our ideas and feelings; communicate pleasure or pain; excite hope or fear; strike terror into another’s mind; or, by the sudden utterance of a single word, influence, without the concurrence of his own will, the motion of his heart, and agitate his whole frame: these, and every other thing, which may be instanced in our nature or faculties, even we ourselves, who both have and exercise them, find to be, in some respect or other, incomprehensible mysteries.

To whatsoever department of knowledge we may direct our attention; what way soever we may turn; we come at length to

‘ Analogy, II. ch. iv.

the same result: mystery meets and surrounds us at every step. “ Hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us; but the things that are in heaven, who hath searched out^g? ” Above all, when we approach to the consideration of Him, who “ hath made all things^h, ” and “ whom no man hath seen or can seeⁱ; ” a mystery presents itself, unbounded, and infinitely exalted above our comprehension. He is without beginning and without end; and yet is Himself both the beginning and the end: He is not older now, than He was millions of ages since; nor is He younger now, than He will be, when millions of ages shall have passed: He is every where present throughout infinite space, filling all things with His power; yet He is not extended: His goodness will be the inexhaustible source of felicity to saints and angels: His perfections will be their never-ending subject of contemplation and discovery: and, as far as we can judge, His existence may, perhaps must, for ever

^g Wisd. ix. 16. ^h Prov. xvi. 4. ⁱ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

remain a mystery, impenetrable to the highest created intellect.

If, then, mysteriousness and incomprehensibility were a sufficient reason for unbelief, there is not one thing which we could believe. Uncertainty would take the place of knowledge; and doubt, gloomy and interminable, would usurp the province of faith. Neither the sight of our own eyes, nor the hearing of our own ears, nor the handling with our own hands, could prove to us the existence of a single object: even the demonstrative sciences would be degraded into systems of merely probable hypothesis: self-consciousness would be insufficient to establish our identity: and the being of God would be the most incredible subject which could be proposed for our belief.

The circumstance, therefore, of a thing's being mysterious, is not a just ground of objection against its credibility. It may, on the contrary, teach us a most useful lesson, on the situation in which it has pleased the Creator to place us, and on the shortness and imperfection of our faculties.

For a thing can be mysterious to us, only when it is so vast, that no created mind can comprehend it; or when, though beings of higher intelligence or acquirements than ours, comprehend it, we are yet unable to do so; or when the subject is in itself intelligible to us, but is concealed from our view. The first kind of mystery we may call absolute; the second, relative; and the third, artificial. To God, nothing is mysterious: “all things are naked and opened^k” to Him: while He is Himself a mystery to every creature of His hand. To all human beings, the resurrection, the judgment, the different states of the righteous and the wicked after judgment, are mysterious; though angels may understand them. To all men living, the state of the soul after death is mysterious; though it may not be so to angels, or to departed souls themselves. In this world, again, things may be mysterious to one, which are not so, in the same respect, to another. Many things are mysterious in childhood, which we afterwards learn to understand:

^k Heb. iv. 13.

the untutored inhabitant of one part of the world is familiar with many phenomena in nature, which the inhabitant of another part will think contrary to nature: and the mind of the same individual will, at one degree of cultivation, comprehend and admit many things, which, at a lower degree, it would consider absurd or incredible. To these instances of the first and second kinds of mystery, we may add, for the sake of clearness, the mention of the Lord's Supper, as exemplifying the third kind: this ordinance, not to speak of its spiritual intentions, being a mystery to those who have not been admitted to its celebration.

As therefore, in all cases, mystery is owing to our natural incapacity, to the inferior progress we may have made in the cultivation of our minds, or to our not having the privilege of exercising them on the particular subject; it is evident that mystery does not in any case interfere with credibility. Nor, indeed, are we in the habit of thinking that it does. For, to pass over the third kind, as not requiring

further notice: who ever thinks of teaching a child to withhold his assent from every thing above his capacity? who would contend that the Hottentot or the Esquimaux is entitled to mark out boundaries, beyond which our knowledge or belief of the powers of nature should not extend? or who would say that the untutored rustic is entitled to prescribe limits to science? Who again would affirm, that we ought to disbelieve those things, which we “know not now, but” are assured that we “shall know hereafter!”? and who, but the atheist, whose presumption has led him into that greatest of all absurdities, the denial of a god, would call on us to disbelieve that greatest of all mysteries, the existence of God?

On the contrary, we endeavour to abate the self-confidence of the young, the ignorant, and the unlearned; to bring them down to a just estimate of their powers, situation, or attainments; and to lead them on to a knowledge of that which they do not as yet, but may, understand, by gradual

¹ John xiii. 7.

instruction. In religious matters, we are instructed to hope, that, though “ now we see through a glass darkly,” we shall one day see “ face to face;” and though we “ now know in part” only, “ we shall then know even as also we are known^m. ” We are admonished of the vanity and presumption of thinking, that we can comprehend or “ search out the Almighty unto perfection;” that we are to submit our understandings to the revelation He has vouchsafed to us of Himself; that we are to regulate our conduct according to that, which revelation permits us to apprehend of Him; and imitate those moral perfections, which He has condescended to propose for our example.

If, then, we are so encompassed with mystery : if there is so much within and around us, which we can neither comprehend nor penetrate: and if this does not, in any degree, disturb the confidence of our knowledge, belief, or opinions on any other subject; insomuch that we are in the constant habit of believing and acting upon what we

^m 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

neither do, nor can, wholly understand : how pre-eminently absurd it is, to object its mysteriousness against a fact, the credibility of which cannot, in any way, be affected by it ! how presumptuous, to make our imperfections and ignorance a reason for disbelieving that, which, if true, must be expected to be above our comprehension ! how inconsistent and unreasonable, to forsake, in this one instance, the course we pursue with regard to every thing else ; to single out, and, on the ground of the mysterious fact which it sets forth, to hesitate in our belief of, a doctrine relating to the internal economy, if I may so speak, of Him, who is infinitely mysterious, and “ past finding outⁿ ! ”

II. Having thus exposed the irrelevancy of pleading its mysteriousness, as a reason for disbelieving the Trinity : we come to those objections which arraign the doctrine, on the ground of its being impossible in fact, and self-contradictory in words. I join these two objections together ; because, that which is impossible, being also self-

ⁿ Job ix. 10.

contradictory, the discussion of the one necessarily includes the discussion of the other.

If, indeed, the objections on which we are now entering, were openly and directly advanced by those who make the preceding objection, it would be altogether unnecessary to discuss them: since the plea of mystery would be equivalent to the admission of their being unable, either to prove that the Trinity in Unity is impossible, or to sustain any other essential objection against the doctrine. To object mystery, is to plead real ignorance: to object impossibility, is to plead pretended knowledge: both of which pleas could not, with any plausibility, be directly or concurrently made on behalf of the same party. The awkwardness of such a position, the Socinians and Unitarians are too acute not to have perceived: and, accordingly, “averring” that they do not “reject the doctrine of the Trinity, or any other doctrine, solely because it is incomprehensible;” they profess to take their stand

[°] Belsham's Bamp. Lect. reproved, Lond. 1819, p. 11.

on the other objections which I have specified ; and content themselves with indirect or occasional manifestations of hostility to the doctrine, on the ground of its then assumed mysteriousness. For though they allege that the doctrine is sufficiently intelligible, to authorize their pronouncing it with the utmost confidence self-contradictory ; they seldom omit the opportunity of sarcastic reflections on its mysteriousness, when there is a chance of prejudicing the ignorant or the unreflecting. Nor, indeed, would they have it supposed, that they are ready to admit the doctrine, if no other objection were made against it than that of mystery : for it is a favourite maxim with them, that “ where mystery begins, religion ends ;” and their “ doctrine,” they boast, “ has no mysteries^p :” though, on reflection, it must be obvious to most persons, that a religion without mysteries is even more impossible than they represent the Trinity to be. A religion without mysteries must necessarily be a religion without

^p Belsham's Letters to the Bishop of London, Lond. 1815, p. 61.

a god, and without any but the most degrading hopes.

But to proceed: while the objection already considered, rests upon a supposition which, as we have seen, is universally false; those now before us, rest upon an axiom which is universally true: for it is indisputable, that nothing which is impossible in itself, or self-contradictory in words, ought ever to be proposed as an article of faith. Admitting this axiom, therefore, in the fullest extent, we must yet remark, that it necessarily and obviously presupposes, on each particular subject to which it is applied, the determination, and in him who applies it, the ability to determine, that the subject is impossible. Upon these points the justness of its application depends.

Thus, for instance, we reject the doctrine of transubstantiation; because, in the first place, we are competent judges of the fact which it asserts: secondly, because we have plain evidence that this fact is impossible: and thirdly, because nothing impossible is to be believed. Of the alleged

fact, we are as competent judges, as the apostles were of the miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ: because it is, as these things also were, a matter of which the senses are fully cognizant. That fact we judge to be impossible: since the body of Christ, though glorified, is still human; and no human body can remain such, and yet assume the outward appearance, form, colour, and taste of a wafer of bread; neither can it be multiplied, so that it, and all its counterparts, should be still the same one body; nor can it be in heaven, and in many different places on earth, at the same time; nor can it meet itself, nor go away from itself: because these things are as plainly impossible, and as directly opposed to reason and nature, as for a thing to be, and not to be, at the same time; insomuch that nothing could be more absurd, than an attempt to prove their impossibility. Here, then, are both the ability to determine, and the clearest evidence to justify the determination, that transubstantiation is impossible; and that, consequently, it ought not to be believed.

The Romanist, it is true, asserts, that this determination is precluded by the express sentence of Scripture: but when he is called on—not merely to repeat, but—to maintain his assertion, he is obliged in substance to confess that Scripture contains no such sentence; unless he is permitted to put an interpretation on one or two passages, which defies the rules of scriptural criticism, and rests, not on true catholic authority, but, ultimately and solely, upon a modern decree of his Church.

The case is far otherwise with respect to the question before us. We are not competent judges of the fact: and whether any one may think himself competent or not, he has no evidence to prove its impossibility. We, therefore, who believe it, presume not to determine any thing beforehand on its possibility or impossibility: but, as we are conscious that the Divine Being is very imperfectly understood by us, and that the existence of the three Persons in the one undivided God-head may, for any thing we do know, be

perfectly consistent with that which we do not know of Him; we believe the fact on the evidence of Scripture; and the fact being established on that evidence, we cannot but see that the possibility of it is established at the same time.

The Unipersonalists, however, conceive that they are competent judges of the fact; and proclaim themselves to be infallibly certain, that the Trinity in Unity is impossible, and the doctrine self-contradictory. But the method which they take to substantiate these objections, of itself demonstrates the weakness of their claim. The only mode of argument which they have as yet pursued on this head, is, either in substance to assume the very question at issue: or, to misrepresent the doctrine, and force upon its terms a meaning different from that in which they are intended, and which, on fair examination, they would convey to an unprejudiced mind ; and then, to argue from their own misrepresentations.

Of their former mode of argument, we shall treat in another place : the latter we shall now investigate.

It is unnecessary to dwell on the disingenuous practice of dealing with the doctrine of the Trinity, as if it expressly stated that the Father is a God, the Son a God, and the Holy Ghost a God. The insertion of the article, it is obvious, produces a wholly different sense. But the course pursued by our opponents, as to the meaning of the word person, requires more particular notice.

In common use, this word means an individual intelligent agent, existing separately from all others: but as applied to the Divine Being, we use it to signify, one of three individual intelligent agents, existing separately from all other beings, yet not separately, but distinctly, from each other. The two meanings, therefore, agree together in setting forth an individual intelligent agent, separate from all other beings, and distinct from all other intelligent agents: but they differ in this one point; that, as applied to created beings, the word superadds the idea of existing, not only distinctly, as in the other case, but also, separately, from all other intelligent

agents. In other words: the difference is that between being separate, and being distinct, from all other persons. And this difference, though it may be apparently slight, is nevertheless of essential importance: the question before us depending, as will be seen, immediately upon it.

Our right to make this difference, no candid person, who has any acquaintance with the nature and use of language, will for a moment dispute: least of all ought they to dispute it, who lay it down as a caution to be particularly observed in the interpretation of Scripture, that “the connexion between words and ideas is perfectly arbitrary.”¹ Or, if any will dispute our right, they will be obliged by their own reasoning, to deny that any word can have more than one meaning; and then to admit, that the Scriptural expressions, the hand, the foot, the eye, the mind, the will, the love of God, and such like, either are an abuse of language, or prove that God is “altogether such an one as ourselves.”² Whereas all words which we can apply to

¹ Belsham, Calm Inquiry, p. 5.

² Ps. 1. 21.

the Divine Being, must be in a sense more or less different from that in which they apply to His creatures.

Nor are our reasons for making this difference, and for rejecting the idea of separate, while we retain that of distinct, existence, in the meaning of the word person, when applied to God, less strong, than our right to make it is clear. Nothing can be more certain from Scripture, interpreted according to the ordinary rules of language, than that there is but one God : and this, it ought never to be forgotten, is the very foundation of our doctrine. By the very same rules of language, we learn the following truths also : namely, first, that there are three, whom we are to believe in as God, because the highest names and perfections of God are attributed to them : secondly, that these three are all Persons, because they are said to do that which none but intelligent agents or persons can do ; and this is sufficient authority for applying the word, persons, to them : thirdly, that they are distinct, not merely in relation to us, as our Creator, Redeemer,

and Sanctifier, but, in relation to each other, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and this is sufficient authority for calling them distinct Persons. But to call them separate Persons, were, either to divide the Godhead into separate parts; and so, none of the Persons would be perfect God, for the part is not equal to the whole: or to make three separate and perfect Gods, and so make Scripture expressly contradict itself.

The reason, then, and warrant for our use of the term person in the doctrine of the Trinity, is that very doctrine, of which, though in an erroneous sense, the objectors claim to make so exclusive a profession; and from which, therefore, the great body of them in the present day, have thought fit to assume their name; the Unity of God. That in our use of the term person, we are not to be accused of a quibble upon words, or of making really slight differences or fanciful distinctions, is evident from what has been said; since it makes all the difference between one God, and three Gods. And that it may not be supposed, that

these differences are such as no plain man of common sense would perceive; it is sufficient to observe, that he, who does not conceive the Son or the Holy Spirit to be a name, operation, attribute, or office, conceives them to be Persons: that he who conceives that the Father is not the Son or the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost not the Son, conceives them to be distinct Persons: and he who conceives the Unity of God, and the Trinity of Persons, conceives the Persons to be united, or not separate: so that though he may not know how, or may not take the trouble, to explain this difference to himself, or may not be able accurately to express it; his conceptions will fully agree with the intended meaning of the word; and he will therefore really, though not formally, make the difference: he will conceive the Persons to be distinct, and yet united.

The opponents of the catholic doctrine are fully aware how important this difference is: they know, that one of the only two ways in which they attempt to sustain these objections of impossibility and contra-

diction, must be unsuccessful, if our use of the word, person, is admitted : for the three Divine Persons, distinct, but not separate, are evidently, and by the very terms, but one Divine Being, or God. They therefore represent the word, as admissible only in that sense, which joins with it the idea of existence, separate from all other persons : and hence they reason, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, if each be a Person, must be three separate Persons ; accordingly, that if each be God, they must be three separate Gods ; and, lastly, that for three separate Gods, to be one undivided God, is, in the nature of things, impossible; and in its terms, self-contradictory.

The argument, we will allow, has only one fault; but that is fundamental, and vitiates the whole. It is true, that with respect to men and angels, who are the only intelligent beings, besides God, of whom we have any knowledge, the notion of the word, person, is accompanied with the idea of separate existence. But they are persons, not because they are separate,

but because they are individual intelligent agents; that is, have, whole and entire, the essence and characteristics of their respective natures; and are not parts of any other persons. And, again, their being separate, is not because they are persons; for then, they would be necessarily separate: and that they are not necessarily separate, is indisputable: since, if God so please, He may bring two or more human persons into the world, who should each have all the members, organs, faculties, and distinguishing qualities of our nature; and who should yet be so united, that, from the dependence of the life of the one upon the other, they should altogether form but one being. Nor is it to be denied, that the same power is able also to cause a substantial union between the persons of two or more angels, or disembodied spirits; so that all the persons should both remain distinct, and have but one common being. To maintain the opposite, were, evidently and arbitrarily, to limit Almighty power. Hence, personality, strictly speaking, does not include separate existence.

The definition of the one is complete without the other: or else there will be this difficulty, arising from the possibilities now stated, that necessity is not invariable; which is a contradiction in terms. But distinctness, on the other hand, is indispensable to personality: for if it be not, one person may be another; the absurdity of which, need not be pointed out.

The use, then, which we make of the word, person, is sanctioned by the strictest rules of reasoning and language; and the meaning which our opponents would invariably attach to it, is in disregard of the principles of both. Their definition of personality will not stand: and consequently, the argument which they build upon it, applies, not to the doctrine itself, but to their own misrepresentation of it.

The true and only reason, why persons among angels and men are separate, is, because it is their nature, according to its ordinary course,—in other words, because it is the will of their Maker, that they should be so. A stronger reason than this will not apply; and none other, which is

adequate, can be assigned. They are made separate; but had it been consistent with the designs of the Creator, especially with reference to their moral government, they might have been united. On the other hand, the only reason, analogous to, or contrasting with this, which can be applied to the Divine Being, to Him, who is without beginning, and is “the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever^t,” determines, with the highest degree of certainty, that the Persons of the holy Trinity cannot be separate; and that therefore we must believe them to be one Being, one God. The Divine Being is, of His own nature, infinite: and from this it follows, that to suppose He is, or can be divided, were to suppose that which is a direct contradiction in terms; to suppose Him finite, and yet infinite. But who has so “perfectly searched out” this infinite and “Almighty Being,” as to know that He cannot have a distinction of Persons? We will not say that “such knowledge is too high and wonderful for us^u:” because, if we inter-

^t Heb. xiii. 8.

^u Psalm cxxxix. 6.

pret the Scriptures without prejudice or partiality, we shall find decisive proofs that the Divine Being has the distinction of Three Persons; and that, consequently, the opposite, having no existence or truth, cannot be a subject of knowledge, but is a dream of presumptuous and unreasonable prejudice. As therefore, it is the nature of men, in its usual course, and, as far as we know, of angels also, to be separate in their persons, and thus, to be, each of them, a separate being: so it is the immutable nature of the Divine Persons, to be, though distinct, yet not separate from each other, and with each other, to be One undivided and adorable God.

But here another foundation of the objections of impossibility and contradiction, is opened to our view. For there are two ways, as we have before intimated, in which our opponents endeavour to sustain them: the one, of representing a person to be of necessity a separate being: the other, of asserting the Unity of God; to be an unity not only of nature, but of person; and then, arguing, that the Trinity in Unity

is impossible, because, as is most true and evident, one person cannot be three persons. As this question, however, respecting the Unity of God, will come before us on another occasion, since on it, the doctrine of the Trinity is said to be opposed to the first principles of natural and revealed religion ; I shall, at present, content myself with observing, that to call the Divine Unity an unity of person, in the Unitarian sense, involves an assumption, no less unwarrantable, than that which we have now exposed.

SERMON II.

1 COR. ii. 14.

The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

IT was stated in the preceding Lecture, that the following objections are made against the doctrine of the Trinity: first, that it is mysterious and incomprehensible; secondly, that a Trinity of persons in one God, is impossible in fact; thirdly, that it is contradictory in words; and fourthly, that it is opposed to the first principles of natural and revealed religion. The three first objections were there considered; and the fourth remains for examination.

I might, indeed, have formally completed this class of objections, by adding those of

tritheism and absurdity: but they are virtually included in the objections of impossibility and contradiction; and, with these, have been proved to be groundless and inapplicable. It is evident that the doctrine in itself cannot be convicted of either tritheism or absurdity: because it carefully abstains, on the one hand, from “dividing the substance” of the Deity, and thus making three Gods; and on the other, from “confounding the Persons^a,” and thus falling into the absurdity of making one person another. Nor are the consequences of the doctrine more liable to these charges: as it is clear from a strict investigation of personality, both that persons may be perfectly distinct, yet not separate from each other; and that three Divine Persons are not necessarily three Gods. Our doctrine, therefore, is wholly free from these objections: though Arians, who divide the substance; and Sabellians, who confound the persons; have to answer them as they best may.

The objection which now comes before

^a Athanasian Creed.

us, appears to me to require a more lengthened discussion than those already considered. We are far, indeed, from denying,—on the contrary, we maintain with as much sincerity and zeal as the Unipersonalists themselves can profess,—that whatever is really opposed to the first principles either of natural or of revealed religion, is not to be believed. But it cannot have escaped the notice of any who have even a superficial acquaintance with the arguments of the Unipersonalists, particularly of those sections of them which are called Socinians and Unitarians, to how high a degree the claims of natural religion, and therein, of unassisted reason, are overrated by them:—that, in fact, they make natural religion a standard to which every doctrine of revelation is to be reduced, and constitute their own reason the supreme arbiter of religious truth. The present objection affords one instance of such pretensions: and as these pretensions are advanced in a more prominent and offensive manner against the doctrine of the Trinity, than against any other doctrine: as Unitarian writers have

not scrupled to say, that even if the doctrine of the Trinity were stated in the most explicit and formal terms in the Scriptures, they would not admit it: as this doctrine, if so stated, or if really contained in the Scriptures, must be itself one of the first principles of revealed religion: and as, in consequence, the whole objection means no more than that the doctrine of the Trinity is opposed to the first principles of natural religion, and of revealed religion brought down to that standard: the examination of the objection seems to me not only to demand an inquiry into the first principles of natural and revealed religion, but to call for a previous investigation of the claims of natural religion itself.

Deferring, then, our consideration of the first principles of religion to the following Lecture, we shall employ the present opportunity in an endeavour to shew jointly, that, in fact, there never has been, and, as man is now constituted, in all probability, there never could have been, such a thing as natural, in contradistinction to revealed,

religion : and that natural religion, instead of being the rival or the equal of revelation, is altogether subordinate to it. This endeavour will yield the collateral advantage, of shewing also the insufficiency of unassisted reason to acquire or to maintain the position, to which our opponents are so fond of exalting it.

No person, who believes the history of Scripture, will venture to assert, that mankind have at any period been obliged to find out for themselves the first principles of religion. That primæval revelation, the reception of which can alone account, under all the circumstances, for the universal consent of mankind in the being of a god, and of which, therefore, that consent is a decisive proof, has always preoccupied the mind ; and this in so great a degree, as to make many persons of no mean discernment believe the notion of God to be innate, or born with us. But that it is not innate, is justly concluded^b from the exceptions to universal consent, which are well known to have existed ;

^b Locke's Essay, i. ch. 4. sect. 8, &c.

for if it were innate, all would possess it. And even if there had not been any exceptions, the conflicting variety of notions, which, almost from the beginning, have been entertained respecting the Deity, is irreconcileable with the supposition of those notions being innate: since the only cause, which could be assigned, of their being such, would impress them uniformly on the minds of all; and then, either they would remain uniform, which is contrary to fact; or they would be found deepest and clearest in children and savages, which is contrary to common sense^c.

If it be said, that universal consent has its rise in men coming naturally to take up the idea of a god: we reply, that whatever would bring men naturally to adopt the idea of a god, would exert its influence on all, so that there would not be any exceptions; or it would act uniformly upon all, so that there would not be, at least, any opposing variety in their notions. The force of nature within would be felt by all: and the force of nature without, would lead

^c Locke's Essay, i. ch. ii. 27. and i. ch. iii. §. 20.

them, as far as they went, to an uniform system of belief; for nature is still the same, and teaches the same lessons.

If, again, it should be attempted to account for the universal belief of a god, by supposing that the first men attained to a knowledge of his existence, by their own unassisted reason: such a supposition is altogether inconsistent with probability; with the circumstances, under which that belief has been always found; with its history subsequent to its rise; with the moral condition of man, exemplified as well by that history, as by individual experience; and with the earliest accounts, which have reached us of the beginning of religion.

1. It is altogether improbable, that men, who were ignorant of the very first elements of knowledge, and had to learn, by slow experience, the methods of supplying their most common and pressing wants, would have ability or leisure to reason themselves into the persuasion of an unseen being, whose existence might account for the course of nature around them: and

this is the more improbable, when we consider the little real improvement, which the most powerful minds afterwards made in the knowledge of God, even when His existence had been already made known to them. The probability rather is insurmountable, that the good and wise Creator would instruct mankind at the earliest period, in the knowledge necessary for their preservation and comfort; and much more, that He would apprise them of His existence and their obligations, and make known to them the sanctions by which those obligations were to be enforced.

2. This probability will be advanced, as I conceive, to positive certainty, by a consideration of the circumstances under which the belief of a god has been universally found: this belief always proving, when carefully examined, to be accompanied with a sense,—in some cases, no doubt, a very low sense,—of moral obligation, enforced by a reference to some kind of future state. Now it is most true, that, opening the volumes of nature and reason with the key which the Gospel of Christ has put

into our hands, we find very strong analogical and moral proofs of our responsibility, and of the justness of directing our expectations towards a future life. But these are the very kinds of proof, which men in a rude state are most slow to perceive, and most unable to appreciate: and even did they perceive it, the impression on beings constituted as we are, would be too weak for them to feel sufficient interest in retaining or communicating it.

When, moreover, it is remembered, how much occasional circumstances in the natural and moral world, appear to contravene the idea of a just and kind superintendence over human affairs; and how prone mankind are to overlook a general rule of beneficence and justice, and to fix their attention on incidental variations from it: it can hardly be questioned, that, unless they had some supernatural insight into the character and designs of the Creator, those things in nature and reason which, with our knowledge, corroborate to us the doctrines of our responsibility and a future state, would seem to rude minds indicative

of the reverse. The beneficent order of nature, and the patient dispensation of its all-wise Governor, would fail to arrest the attention of uncultivated men, who were ignorant of God: or if they should turn their attention to these things, the very regularity of the former, and the long-suffering of the latter, would, in all probability, be accounted the effect of some undiscriminating and unintelligent cause; while the lightning and the thunder, the wild beast, the serpent and the scorpion, disease and death, and the existence of moral evil, would with equal probability impress them with a sense of subjection to some malignant power. Thus the grounds of moral obligation, and of hope towards the future, would not be perceived: and the religion which sinful man, unenlightened by revelation, would find out for himself, if he found out any, would be, as is abundantly proved in the case of heathen nations, a debasing and slavish superstition.

3. The religion, however, which at first prevailed, was not of this character: for

the nearer we trace up its history to the source, the purer and more elevated its doctrines are found to have been; and the clearer and more certain were the prospects which it set before men. But had religion, in its principles, obligations, or sanctions, been the discovery of reason, this order would have been inverted: the beginning would have had many imperfections and obscurities; and the progress would have been as of “a light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day^d.” Whereas the course of religion with men left to their own inventions, has always, until the time of Christ, been downward; descending rapidly, through every order of being, from the acknowledgment of the true God, to the deification even of insects and vegetables: and had it not been for the better knowledge enjoyed by the family of Abraham, some scattered and greatly refracted rays of which pierced, from time to time, through the thick darkness of heathenism; for the institutions even of superstition; for the congeniality

^d Prov. iv. 18.

to the mind, of the notion of some superior being; for the instinctive influence of desire, of hope and fear; and for the assistance which a previous impression of a superior being receives from nature and reason; all idea of a god would doubtless have disappeared from the heathen world, long before the coming of Christ.

This downward progress, moreover, instead of being retarded, was, on the contrary, accelerated, by the efforts of thoughtful men. The more time, materials, and ability reason obtained for finding out God, the less did it know the proper use of these advantages. The more the acute philosophers of antiquity, with their increased knowledge of nature, with the history of past ages before them, and with the light of tradition to assist them in examining these materials, attempted to investigate the existence and attributes of God, and the obligations and prospects of man; the more confused and inconsistent their imaginations became, and the more dark and uncertain were their apprehensions of futurity.

They delivered, it is true, some passages, which, when taken from their connection, convey sublime notions of the nature and character of the Deity, and of the ultimate state of man: but these were notions which they had received from others, and which their own reasonings, prompted by idle curiosity or the love of distinction, led them rather to controvert than to confirm.

The truth, also, which they had received from their fathers, or which, by the help of that, they had discovered for themselves, was “held by them in unrighteousness.” “They did not like to retain God,” and their duty to Him, “in their knowledge:” and He who imparts wisdom and understanding to man^f, “gave them up unto a reprobate mind” to follow their own inventions, whereby they “changed the truth of God into a lie^g. ”

4. And can it be doubted, that the same tendency to the worse, the same aversion from divine knowledge, the same impatience of moral obligation, which led men

^e Romans i. 18. ^f James i. 5. and Job xxxii. 8.

^g Romans i. 28, 25.

in general to “ change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things^h,” and to “ give themselves over,” as we know, “ unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greedinessⁱ;” and which led the philosophers in particular to recommend and to practise the most stupid idolatry, and the most disgusting enormities; would have made men equally averse from the discovery of the true God, from acting upon that discovery by “ glorifying Him as God^k,” and from improving it by a pursuit of the pure and holy conclusions to which it leads? Would not those unhappy characteristics of our present state, which are exemplified in the case of heathen nations, and which, moreover, all history and individual experience prove to belong to it, lead man to reject the slightest intimation of any being possessed of authority to restrain the indulgence of his passions? Would he not detest the very first gleam of light, which shewed

^h Rom. i. 23. ⁱ Eph. iv. 19. ^k Rom. i. 21.

him the evil of his deeds¹; and, having hastened to extinguish the first spark of knowledge, which should kindle in him a feeling of doubt or dissatisfaction as to his present course, endeavour to replace himself in that original darkness, in which he was without God, and without apprehension?

If even right reason, in its infancy, would, as has been briefly shewn, have had many obstacles in its unassisted search after God; it may be safely affirmed, that reason, enslaved by corrupt appetites, would never have originated the belief of a god; would never have annexed to that belief, even the lowest sense of moral obligation; nor would have confirmed that obligation with the hope of reward and the fear of punishment after death. If the reason of the wisest and most virtuous has not unfrequently been overborne, as we know, by the violence of unruly affections; there can hardly be said to be a probability, that the reason of uninstructed and sensual man could deliver itself from

¹ John iii. 19, 20.

the tyranny of his passions and lusts. His whole faculties would be engrossed in worse than brutal indulgence. If ever his reason raised itself up under the weight which oppressed it, its efforts would only tend to “make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof^m:” and no better would that wisdom be, than “earthly, sensual, devilish, which descended not from aboveⁿ,” but was attained in such an exercise of the powers of reason. If hope ever sprang up within his breast, it would be but to enjoy a foretaste of those grovelling pleasures, which he had prepared for himself, or, perhaps, to brood over the fierce determinations of revenge. No spectacle, indeed, in this world, could be presented to the imagination, so melancholy and humiliating, as man left without instruction or help, to acquire, of his own motion and strength, that knowledge, which even the rudest barbarian receives from his parents.

This however is a state, of which, through the merciful providence of the Most High,

^m Rom. xiii. 14.

ⁿ James iii. 15.

mankind cannot be proved to have had any experience in its full extent. But to approach in some measure to an idea of its wretchedness, let the case of those be remembered, who are supposed to have no religion or god. Their condition is so degraded, as to have induced some almost to deny them the name of human beings^o, and to conceive, that, differing but little in attainments, and still less in their manner of living, from the brutes, they formed a link between us and them in the chain of being, only by having the outward lineaments of our species. But low as they have fallen, it is impossible to conceive the depth of brutality and idiotism, to which they would have sunk, without the knowledge and customs transmitted to them from their less degenerate ancestors: an advantage, of which our present argument supposes the first men to have been destitute; and which, though it may appear trifling in comparison with the advantages enjoyed by the civilized part of mankind, is very far from being trifling in itself.

^o Locke, b. i. c. 4. §. 8, note.

And what is it, which has made these nations inferior to others? not, surely, their having less natural ability or capacity than others; since there is not any good ground for supposing, that, if they had equal advantages, they would not rise to the same level^p: but it is the want of religion, which, the more purely it is professed, and the more faithfully it is followed by any nation, will exalt that nation the higher, in every thing that can ennoble and illustrate human nature^q.

In these unhappy nations, therefore, we see even a favourable specimen of that state, to which mankind in general would speedily have reduced themselves, had not the Father of spirits touched the souls of the first men with a spark of divine knowledge, and kindled the desire of inquiry, by communicating to them a certain notice of His existence, of His expectations from them, and of the condition to which they were to be brought after this life; and had He not ordained in His providence, that the father should universally teach the son, at

^p Locke, b. i. c. 4. §. 12.

^q Prov. xiv. 34.

least some faint elements of these things. Had not the case, indeed, been so, the first springs of that moral reformation would have been wanting, without some degree of which, no portion of divine truth would be collected from the most abundant evidence; or if even seen in the clearest characters, would be either perceived or valued^r.

When, then, we consider man as possessed indeed of reason, but governed by passion; that reason at the best is weak, but passion strong from the very first; reason slow, but passion rapid and luxuriant, in growth; and that reason, under the increasing violence of passion, is dormant and almost extinct; we must admit the necessity of some power beyond his own to awaken and animate his reason, and to strengthen it against his passions. And when we consider, further, that the nature of the case presents to us the first men, as having no instructor or guide, but left to find out of themselves that knowledge, which seems almost natural to those

^r Matt. xiii. 15.

who have had parents to bring them up, and which instinct teaches to the brutes; as destitute also of those incentives, encouragements, and helps to the denial of their passions, and the right exercise of their reason, which the instructions, experience, and example of virtue supply; we must confess the impossibility of their finding out even the first principles of religion; and that since they were possessed of religion, “pure and undefiled” in its main features, it came to them by no other means, than the special revelation and aid of Him who is “the author and finisher of” all right “faith,” the object of all true obedience, and the abundant rewarder of godliness.

5. The supposition, that the first men attained of themselves to the belief of the supreme Being, is yet further disproved by every account which, previous to the time of Christ, was attempted to be given of the origin of that belief.

And here we may observe upon the entire absence of all opposing evidence under this head. I believe that no writer

before the Christian era can be shewn to have attributed to human reason that merit, which the advocates of natural, in contradistinction to revealed, religion are so fond of claiming for it. Even in mythology, where, if any where, we might have expected to find some allusion to the rise of religion, no traces exist of religion being a discovery. The inventors and patrons of those arts and sciences, which may be said to be the first steps from savage towards civilized life, were deified by the superstitions of ancient heathenism ; but no discoverer of the highest and noblest of all sciences is found to have been commemorated. On the contrary, by representing the gods as having, at first, resided personally among men, mythology bears no inconsiderable testimony in favour of the position, that the knowledge of the Deity came, in the first instance, by direct intercourse with Him.

Indeed, it has been observed by one of the most able supporters of the Unitarian heresy, that “ it is well known to have been a long time before men pre-

tended to reason at all on subjects of morals or religion^s." And for many centuries after they had begun to reason upon these subjects, the universal belief in a God was ascribed, almost without exception, immediately to tradition, and ultimately to revelation. Some there certainly were, who imputed religion to the contrivance of wise men, for the good of their country; and some, who gave it the name of priesthood: but they either were enemies to religion in itself, or spoke only of its corruptions. The former, therefore, were not competent witnesses; and the testimony of the latter is inapplicable to our present subject. There were others also, who, as we have already stated, conceived that the idea of God is born with us: but they could not deny the fact, that, from the very earliest times, one generation had been taught by another to believe in the existence of a superior unseen being, on whom they more or less depended: nor did they assert, that the idea of such a being is innate, to account for the universal belief

^{*} Priestley, Institutes, 4th ed. Lond. 1818, vol. i. p. 117.

in him to the exclusion of tradition ; but to vindicate tradition, and to account for the prevalence, not only without any national, but without any individual exception, as they thought, of that belief of which it was the channel. Or, if any do appear to have accounted for the belief in a god, solely from the supposed innate idea of Him, they did so, to the exclusion equally of reasoning and tradition. Without availing ourselves, therefore, of the advantage, that the supposition of innate ideas is, as we have seen^t, untenable ; enough has been said to prove, that, in the opinion of those, who could best tell us how their own knowledge, and that of their contemporaries, was acquired, or rather how it was not acquired, the belief of a god did not enter into the world by any process of unassisted reason.

It has, however, been urged, that the testimony of some of the inspired writers, and particularly of St. Paul, is opposed to this conclusion. If this were indeed so, the question would be at once decided: but that it is not so, will be evident upon the

^t Pages 39, 40.

most cursory examination of that testimony. For, to take the strongest and most direct of such passages, as have been advanced in support of this objection: St. Paul indeed says: “that which may be known of God is manifest among men, for God hath shewed it unto them; for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead^u. ” But though he thus asserts, that God had, in His works, given to all mankind the clearest evidences of His being, His eternal power and Godhead; the apostle does not say, or give any countenance to the opinion, that God had left the progenitors of our race to find Him out from this evidence alone, that He had given them no key to interpret it, or that they either did find, or would have found, Him out from it.

The meaning and object of the apostle are far different from this. Whatever blame, if any, might have justly attached to men, failing of themselves to trace out

^u Romans i. 19, 20.

from His works the being and attributes of the Divine Workmaster; he shews, that, under the actual circumstances of the case, they had contracted a degree of guilt so inexcusable, that God in judgment had given them over to a reprobate mind; because, “when they knew God^x,” “they did not like to retain Him in their knowledge^y;” and, “professing themselves to be wise” in the interpretation of those simple and luminous characters, with which He had described His attributes in the volume of nature, “they became fools^z,” insomuch that they perceived not the invisible things of God, though they were clearly seen; and truth itself was transformed into falsehood in their hands^a. This, assuredly, was not the way to work out the first principles of religion: and if St. Paul does not here expressly say, through what means those principles were acquired by mankind; yet, in shewing that they had so grossly abused the only means of acquiring them by their own investigation, his opinion is sufficiently

^x Rom. i. 21. ^y Ibid. ver. 28. ^z Ibid. ver. 22.

^a Ibid. ver. 25.

plain, that the principles of religion were made known to, and not discovered by, them. The conclusion, therefore, which we have deduced from the accounts of heathen antiquity, is even confirmed by the passages of Scripture, which are supposed to controvert it.

But do the Scriptures nowhere give a more explicit and direct account of this matter? The beginning of the sacred volume informs us, not that our first parents were abandoned to the unassisted dictates of their own minds, but that on the very day of their creation, and before they had satisfied the first and simplest wants of nature, the benevolent Creator personally conversed with them, and pointed out to them the kinds of food, which He had allotted for their support. Thus God Himself revealed His existence to man; and to this and succeeding revelations, as to its original and only adequate source, is to be attributed that belief in God, which all ages and all nations, the most rude and the most civilized, have, with few exceptions, displayed.

That the preservation of this belief, in countries removed from the direct influence of the Jewish and Christian revelations, may in part be attributed to the evidence of nature and reason in its favour, is highly probable; but that any one of the principles which natural religion includes ever originated from this evidence alone, can neither be proved, nor, I think, even plausibly maintained.

Is natural religion, then, to be altogether rejected? By no means. We disclaim it only as an independent or self-sufficient system, as the rival, or even the equal as far as it goes, of revelation. Though writers on natural religion too commonly attribute to its evidence the vigour and efficiency, with which the principles it confirms were previously impressed on their minds from a very different and far higher source: we object not to its evidence, as if it had any defect of clearness and pertinency, or were insufficient to convince pure, unfettered reason; but because it has not in itself the power to liberate human reason, to arrest its attention, or to con-

vince it in opposition to the natural bias of the heart.

We cannot, therefore, receive natural religion as a code of doctrines, which nature and reason ever of themselves taught mankind; but we willingly admit it as the humble handmaid of revelation, as consisting of truths, which revelation has made known to us, and which nature and reason confirm. The testimony which natural thus bears to revealed religion, is clear and incontrovertible. To bear this testimony, and thus to recommend the doctrines of revelation, is its legitimate province; but to overstep these bounds, is to vindicate, by the help of revelation, pretensions, which nature and reason never made, nor ever were able to substantiate.

Let us now, in conclusion, reflect on the greatness of our obligations to Him, “ who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto^c” mankind: that, of ourselves naturally more helpless and dependent than all other beings, perverted also in our wills, depraved in our affections,

^c Heb. i. 1.

we are both indebted to Divine instruction for the simplest and most elementary principles of religion, and owe even our elevation in habits and attainments above the inferior creatures, to the impulse and strength which God has given to our reason by the communication of these principles.

These truths may be humiliating to our pride, but they are not therefore the less useful for our contemplation. If art and science enable us to exercise a degree of dominion over the elements, and to weigh and measure the lights of heaven ; if the refinements of civilization open our hearts to the influence of every noble and amiable feeling ; if the light of religion shine amongst us with all its purity and brightness ; let us not boast of any of these things, as if they had been acquired by our own power and might, or had been obtained through our own merits ; but let us remember, that the unlettered savage, the remorseless cannibal, the worshipper of wood and stone, are of one blood with ourselves, children with us of one common father,

and representatives of that condition, from which we have been preserved by advantages not natural to man ; and that, if we would sustain our superiority to “ the ox which knoweth his owner, and the ass which knoweth his master’s crib^c, ” we must consider and thankfully acknowledge the hand which has conferred these advantages upon us. There is nothing, indeed, by which we differ from the least favoured portion of our race, which we have not also received : but if we withhold a due acknowledgment of our obligations to Him, who has so highly distinguished us by His goodness ; if we recognize not the day of our visitation ; is it not written, “ there are last that shall be first, and there are first which shall be last^d : ” “ thou, Caper-naum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell ; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day : but it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee^e ? ”

^c Isa. i. 3.

^d Luke xiii. 30.

^e Matt. xi. 23, 24.

Or if any, in the self-sufficiency of their minds, think themselves able to “ understand all mysteries and all knowledge^f;” or entitled to reject every thing as impossible or absurd, which they do not understand ; it may abate the pride of their superficial reasoning, to represent to them the “ vanity of man in his best estate^g;” and to recal to their recollection the melancholy failure of men in former days, the monuments of whose genius, admired by the whole civilized world, prove that they possessed at least as great powers of mind as themselves.

But if, lastly, any are contentious ; and, taking those doctrines which are common to natural and revealed religion, choose to push some of them farther than either religion warrants ; and then to explain away, as modes and figures of speech, the peculiar doctrines of revelation, because they are at variance with their meagre creed ; it is well to remind them, how clearly both experience and the Scriptures testify, that “ God turneth the wise men backward^h,” but

^f 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

^g Ps. xxxix. 5.

^h Isa. xliv. 25.

“ revealeth unto babes” that knowledge which “ the wise and prudentⁱ” superciliously despise ; that “ His Spirit will not always strive with man^k;” and that they may at length find themselves to have used “ the enticing words of man’s wisdom!” in so vain an attempt, as to shew those doctrines to be “ a stumbling-block and foolishness,” which were yet “ the power and the wisdom of God^m. ”

ⁱ Matt. xi. 25.

^k Gen. vi. 3.

^l 1 Cor. ii. 4.

^m 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

SERMON III.

EPHESIANS iv. 4—6.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

THAT there never has been—that constituted as man is, in all probability, there never could have been—such a thing as natural, in contradistinction to revealed, religion; and that the claims of the former are altogether subordinate to the latter; may, I trust, be considered as proved. We might, therefore, not unreasonably, spare ourselves the trouble of a distinct inquiry into the principles of natural religion, and at once proceed to examine, whether the doctrine of the Trinity is opposed to the

first principles of revealed religion. But lest we should be reproached with endeavouring to evade objections which we cannot meet; and as, how zealously soever the Unipersonalists may, at times, profess the most faithful deference to Scripture; the doctrines of Scripture are yet curtailed, extenuated, or perverted by them, according to their gratuitously assumed notions of natural religion: we shall inquire, as was proposed, into the first principles both of natural and of revealed religion; and examine to what extent, and in what sense, those principles are to be proved, as well from nature and reason, as from the Scriptures.

It is admitted by all parties in the controversy, that the first principles of religion are the being and unity of God. But it is asserted on the part of our opponents, that the unity of God is personal: and this, if it were proved, would at once establish the opposition which they contend for, between the doctrine of the Trinity and the first principles of religion. We, on the other hand, maintain, that there is no proof of

the personal unity of God: and we are as willing as they can be, to abide the issue of the present inquiry.

I. The arguments of natural religion for the being of God, may, howsoever diversified, be resolved into the two following. First: the appearances of nature are effects, which must have a cause adequate to their production: this cause is God; and the characters by which those effects are distinguished, such as their extent, splendour, adaptation to certain ends, oblige us to impute to Him corresponding attributes. Secondly: something now exists: and this must either have existed from eternity, or have been produced, mediately or immediately, by some other thing which did so exist. Let this something, then, be the inquirer himself. He indeed came into being through the instrumentality of persons like himself; and they also in the same manner: but this succession, by whatever number of steps it may be traced back, must at some time have had a beginning. This succession therefore was not from eternity, and consequently had

its first beginning from a being that was from eternity. And by a regular series of the most conclusive reasoning,—conclusive, I mean, to us, not to untaught and unassisted man,—this eternal Being is proved to be self-existent, independent, unchangeable, infinite, the parent of all other beings, the source of all their perfections, the first cause of all things, God.

By the former mode of argument, “the uniformity of plan observable in the universe^a,” the harmony and order, which exist throughout nature,—as all its departments and details are portions of one complete whole or system,—are set forth as the proof of the unity of God. Adopting the language of a learned expositor of the thirty-nine Articles in another case, “I am unwilling to say any thing to derogate from any argument brought to prove” this or any other equally scriptural “conclusion^b:” but when others misuse such arguments, it is our duty, as opportunity serves, or the

^a Paley's Natural Theology, chap. 25.
on the first Article.

^b Burnet

cause of truth requires it, to point out their proper use and value.

Now even if this argument for the unity were conclusive, it would require but a slight consideration to perceive, that the unity so proved, is not such as our opponents contend for. But not only do the premises not authorize a conclusion, affirmative of an unity of person in the Godhead; they do not prove so much as an unity of being; but, as Archdeacon Paley observes, “the whole argument goes no further than a unity of counsel.” For it must be allowed, that any number of agents or persons may unite, with perfect concord, in the formation and execution of one particular plan: each agent may have a distinct part assigned to him, and all the parts together may form but one harmonious and regular system or whole. Supposing, therefore, that the agents are not seen, their work alone is sufficient to prove,—to those who are competent to pursue such arguments,—that at least one has been employed in it; and if

^c Natural Theology, chap. 25.

the strength and skill, displayed in the easiest part which appears certainly to be the work of one agent alone, appears also equal to the execution of the whole ; and there be in that whole, no symptom of discordant intentions ; then there is no intrinsic proof, that it is the work of more than one : while the possibility of two or more agreeing together in it, would be a bar against the assertion, that it is the work of no more than one only.

And thus it is, with respect to this argument for the Divine unity. The works of nature afford abundant testimony to the existence of one God. For whatsoever department or object of nature we may adopt as the groundwork of our reasoning, it must have an adequate cause. To the power and wisdom attributable to this cause, no limits can be assigned by us : and this power and wisdom are, therefore, to be believed equal to the production of every part of nature. He that formed one plant, one animal, one star, is able to form other plants, animals or stars, of the same and of different kinds. He that made

“ the herb yielding seed after its kind, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit, whose seed is in itself, after its kind,” is able also to make “ the moving creature that hath life, the fowl that flies above the earth in the open firmament of heaven, the cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth after its kind.” He that made these, is able to make man that hath dominion over them : and He that made man, is able to make the earth and the sea, the firmament, and “ the stars of heaven^d. ”

Again : the absence, so far as we have explored, of every mark which would indicate the operation of any other power ; in other words, “ the uniformity of plan observable in the universe,” the harmonious order of nature ; forbids us, because it shews that we have no reason, to believe in the operation, and consequently the existence, of any other than of that one power. Yet in this mode of argument, there is nothing to be advanced, which, in point of strict reasoning, will come up to this most certain truth, that there is

^d Gen. xxvi. 4.

none other than one God. It is proved indeed by it, in a positive sense, that there is one God, which is sufficient for our satisfaction and direction so far; and further also, that they who are dissatisfied with this doctrine, will not find any thing to suggest, much less to vindicate, the belief of more gods than one: but at the same time, nothing is afforded by this mode to prove the negative, that there are “none other gods but” one.

Under the second mode of argument, namely, that which leads us to the acknowledgment of God as the first cause, there are different ways in which His unity is inferred: but the strongest and most conclusive, are those which affirm the impossibility of two first causes, or of two infinite beings of the same kind. Now that there are not two first causes or two infinite beings, in the usual sense of these terms, is a proposition in which both we and our opponents perfectly agree: but it has yet to be shewn, how the limited understanding of man can determine what is possible or impossible, except in matters which involve a plain

and necessary contradiction, with respect to such a being as the great First Cause and Infinite Spirit, of whose essence and mode of subsistence we know so little. It may be correct to say, that there are not, and therefore could not be, two infinite beings; but to reverse the order of reasoning,—to say that there could not be, and therefore are not, two infinite beings,—were to go far beyond our depth, and to argue without the possibility of adequate proof.

Thus then it is evident, that natural religion does not certainly prove this which is accounted one of its first principles. The defects, indeed, of the premises, are compensated by the infallibility with which the conclusion is impressed on our minds by the word of God Himself: but it is satisfactory to find these defects acknowledged by a leading Unitarian writer before quoted, as they are in the following passages of his Institutes of natural religion. “ In all the preceding course of reasoning,” by which the being and attributes of God are proved, “ we have only argued,” he says, “ from

what we see, and have supposed nothing more than is necessary to account for what we see; and as *a cause* is necessary, but not *more causes* than one, we cannot conclude that there are more gods than *one*, unless some other kind of proof can be brought for it. Besides, there is such a perfect *harmony* and *uniformity* in the works of nature, and one part so exactly fits and corresponds to another, that there must have been a perfect *uniformity of design* in the whole, which hardly admits of more than one being as the former of it, and presiding over it." And again he says; "upon the whole, we may remain perfectly satisfied that there is but *one God*, possessed of all the perfections that have been described; and were our minds equal to this subject, I doubt not but that we should be able to see, that there *could have been* but one, and that two gods would have been impossible; as much so, as that there should be in nature two universal infinite spaces, or two eternities, both before and after the present moment. But because we are incapable of judging what

must have been in this case, we are content to argue from what *is*; and upon this ground we have reason enough to conclude that *God is one^e.*"

Now when it is remembered, that this just and reasonable language occurs in a treatise, in which the writer had expressly taken upon himself to prove the doctrines of natural religion; the confidence with which he and his followers propound their peculiar doctrine of the unity, as an axiom of natural religion, must be characterised as altogether immodest and extraordinary.

But though we were to grant, that the arguments of natural religion for the unity of the Divine Being are incontrovertible in every respect; it is obvious that they would advance no farther, than that there is only one God, one First Cause, one Infinite Being; and that they leave the question of an unity of person wholly untouched. And how, indeed, could it be otherwise? Nature and reason may teach us to add to the belief of the Divine ex-

^e Priestley's Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion, vol. i. part i. c. i. sect. 4.

istence, the belief of many negative and relative attributes: but what can they disclose to us of the intrinsic nature or economy of that Being, of whose works, even the meanest and the most familiar, so much surpass our knowledge, that of them we know almost nothing, compared with what we have yet to learn. Does the substance of the most simple object—of a grain of sand—elude our keenest research? and shall we yet think that we can analyze the essence of Him, who dwelleth in light unapproachable by mortal eyes? Surely it were wiser, to abate the pride of our understanding, to confess our ignorance and incapacity, and to acknowledge in their full extent our obligations to that inspired volume, which has taught us with infallible certainty, that there is “one only living and true God.”

II. The doctrine of this blessed Book on the subject before us, we are now to examine.

I. The unity of the Divine Being is expressed in numerous passages both of the Old and the New Testaments: and of

these passages, the following are examples. “The Lord He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath ; there is none else^f. ” “ O Lord God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubim, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth : thou hast made heaven and earth^g. ” “ Thou art great, and doest wondrous things : thou art God alone^h. ” “ I am the first, and I am the last ; and besides me there is no Godⁱ. ” “ I am God, and there is none else : I am God, and there is none like me^k. ” “ The Lord our God is one Lord^l. ” “ There is one God, and there is none other but He^m. ”

These texts prove the unity of God in the most conclusive manner ; but it is obvious that they do not enable us to determine what that unity is. They teach us, that there is but one God, and one first Cause ; that He is God alone ; and that there is none else ; none like Him, none besides Him : still they do not inform us, what

^f Deut. iv. 39. ^g 2 Kings xix. 51. ^h Psalm lxxxviii. 10. ⁱ Isa. xliv. 6. ^k Ibid. xliv. 9.
^l Mark xii. 29. ^m Ibid. ver. 32.

this one God is in Himself; nor carry us a single step towards a decision of the question, whether He exists as one person only, or three persons.

There are, however, four other classes of texts, on which the most confident reliance is placed, for proof of the Uni-personalist doctrine. We shall therefore examine a few of each class in order. And that we may take the surest way to a right judgment, we shall select such texts as appear to be strongest or the most pertinent of their respective classes; and, declining to stretch or to contract the sense of Scripture according to previous and ill-founded notions of natural religion, we shall endeavour to interpret those texts, “according to the analogy or proportion of faith¹,” comparing Scripture with Scripture, “spiritual things with spiritual^m.ⁿ”

2. In the first of these classes, we read thus: “No man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.”—“God so loved the world, that

¹ Rom. xii. 6. ^m 1 Cor. ii. 13. ⁿ John i. 18.

He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life^q.”—“God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son^r.”—“The Spirit of God dwelleth in you^s:” and, “God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts^t.”

From the use of the word God, in these and some similar passages, as that which of itself suffices to designate the Father, who is the first Person of the Trinity, the inferences are attempted to be drawn; that “the appellation in its absolute,” or highest, “sense, is appropriate to the Father only”; that the other Persons, to whom the same appellation is given, received it in an accommodated and much lower sense; and that, consequently, the Father alone thus being the one true God, the Divine unity is an unity of person.

Now this mode of argument is nothing more than a colourable way of assuming the question in debate. If the sense

^q John iii. 16. ^r 1 John v. 11. ^s 1 Cor. iii. 16.
^t Gal. iv. 6. ^u Carpenter’s Proof from Scripture,
 ed. 3. page 19.

ascertains, that the first Person only is intended by the Divine title in these passages; enough appears, at the same time, to shew, that it was meant to ascribe the title to Him, not exclusively, but only in an eminent manner, as He is the fountain of the Son's and the Spirit's Godhead. For he who, in the strict and proper sense of the word, is called a son, is, beyond all controversy, not only of an equal, but of the same, nature with his father: and there is no more reason that He, who “in truth and love^v,” is the Son of God, should not be honoured with the Divine appellation in its highest sense, than that His title, Son of Man, should disprove His equality with the human race.

That the Holy Spirit in like manner is to be addressed with the supreme name, follows, by inevitable consequence, from the relation which He bears to God, and which is denoted by the expressions, “Spirit of God,” and “Spirit of His Son.” For this relation, as St. Paul teaches us, is analogous to that which subsists be-

^v 2 John 3. See also Serm. VI.

tween the human spirit and man; so that the Holy Spirit is truly and properly the Spirit of God, and therefore one with God. The apostle does not, indeed, make the analogy in direct terms: but his meaning necessarily presupposes it, when he compares the knowledge which the Holy Spirit has of the Divine counsels, with that which the human spirit has of its own thoughts. He argues, that, as “the spirit of a man which is in him” alone “knoweth the things of a man,” so “the Spirit of God” alone “knoweth the deep things of God.”^w But the comparison will not hold good, unless the Holy Spirit has opportunities of knowing the things of God, equal to those which the spirit of a man has of knowing the things of a man. Now these opportunities are derived by our spirits, from their peculiar and intimate relation, their essential union, with ourselves: and St. Paul, both obviously by his manner of speaking, and necessarily by the scope of his argument, acknowledges a corresponding relation and union of the Holy

^w 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

Spirit with God. As, therefore, the spirit of a man is human, and, with the body, is the man himself: so, concluding from the analogy as far as it applies, we are to believe that the Spirit of God is divine; is of the same nature with God; and, with the Father and the Son, is the one God Himself.

3. In the next class of passages, adduced for proof of the personal unity of the Godhead, no more than two are to be placed: and these speak of the Father, as the one God. “ We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one. For, though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many and lords many,) yet, to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him ; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him^x. ”—“ There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism ; one God and Father of all,

^x 1 Cor. viii. 4—6.

who is above all, and through all, and in you ally.”

But these quotations are altogether inapplicable to the purpose for which the impugners of the Trinity bring them forward; unless they can be made to prove, not simply that the Father is the one true God, but that He alone, in opposition to the Son and the Holy Spirit, is God. To this, however, there are insuperable obstacles. That the Father is called the one God, in opposition to the numerous idols of the heathen, is most certain; but that He is not so called, in opposition to His Son and His Holy Spirit, is certain also, from the following considerations: that the “all things,” which are by our Lord, are, beyond any kind of just doubt, the “all things,” which are of the Father, and mean the universe with the regulation of its affairs: that therefore, the Apostle attributes creative and providential power to Him: that by calling Him the “one Lord,” in opposition to “many lords,” it is plainly intimated, that the dominion,

* Eph. iv. 4—6.

which the heathen affected to parcel out among those lords, is wholly and entirely vested in Him : that His dominion does not signify merely the influence of His Gospel ; for, since “ all things are by Him,” His dominion was prior to the announcement, and is more extensive than the influence, of the Gospel : that, on the contrary, His dominion is personal ; otherwise, the false gods, whose religion influenced or does influence the minds of men, as really as the Gospel does, would be as truly lord as He : that by calling Him the “ one Lord, by whom are all things,” the Apostle represents His dominion as, not partial and merely delegated, but universal and inherent, extending over “ all things,” in virtue of His own right, since they “ are by Him :” that His dominion is not of an inferior kind, corresponding to that which was attributed to the minor deities ; for He is not compared in the character of a deputy god or lord-agent, with inferior or terrestrial gods ; but, as “ the one Lord, by whom are all things,” “ whether in heaven or in earth,”

He is described to be of a more exalted dignity, than that with which the heathen had learned to invest the highest of their gods ; and is presented to our faith under an attribute, second indeed in the order of conception, but implying infinite power, and therefore equal in glory to that which is here ascribed to the one God the Father : and that if, in short, our Lord Jesus Christ be possessed of creative and providential power ; if real, universal, and supreme dominion be exercised by Him singly, personally, and of His own right ; then, truly, He can be none other than God.

If, again, the words, “one God the Father,” and, “one God and Father of all,” were rightly interpreted to prove the exclusive deity of the Father, in opposition to His Son and His Holy Spirit ; the words, “one Lord,” and “one Spirit,” must also in turn be interpreted to prove the exclusive dominion of our Lord, and spirituality of the Holy Ghost, in opposition to the Father, who would thus appear to be neither Lord nor Spirit. The advocates of the personal unity of God shape

their course, indeed, so as, right or wrong, to avoid such a conclusion: but the gross falsehood and impiety of that conclusion, are decisive against the mode of interpretation which leads to it. They make no difficulty in explaining the “ all things” which are of the Father, to mean, as they do, all things literally, the universe: but, though the very same words, “ all things,” are used in reference to our Lord Jesus Christ; though, in both cases, these words are accompanied with others which identify their meaning; and though, in stating that “ all things are of the Father, and we unto Him,” and “ all things are by the Son, and we by Him,” St. Paul plainly shews the distinct and equally necessary exercise of the same infinite, creative power, on the part of both these Divine Persons; they yet contend, that the “ all things which are by our Lord Jesus Christ,” mean only some things, the Gospel. Having thus prepared their way, they peremptorily decide, that by the expressions, “ one God the Father,” and, “ one God and Father of all,” the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy

Spirit are shewn to be excluded from the Godhead: while, on the contrary, they agree with us, that by the expressions, “one Lord,” and “one Spirit,” St. Paul could not have intended to withhold these titles from the Father. How unworthy such a mode of interpretation is, of those who make any pretensions to critical impartiality, to reverence for Scripture, to the capacity of exercising a plain, unbiassed judgment upon the contents of that sacred book, or to the appellation of rational Christians, need not be pointed out: for the futile and self-contradictory nature of this mode of interpretation is palpably manifest, how much soever it may be endeavoured to conceal it under a gloss of specious words.

The catholic exposition is of a very different character. Adhering to those obvious, safe, and incontrovertible canons of interpretation; that no part of Scripture is contrary to another; that the sense of a passage, which is most conformable with its context, is the true sense; and that the plainer parts of Scripture, are our best

guide for the understanding of those which are more difficult; we expound the texts before us, on a system, uniform, consistent with itself, and leading to no conclusions either mutually subversive, or contradictory to other parts of Scripture.

Now the scope of these texts, no less than the mere form of the expressions, “one Spirit,” “one Lord,” “one God,” shews indisputably, that in each case, the sense of the word “one” is the same; and that, therefore, these titles are respectively applied in the same manner: the sense of that word is clearly marked by its connection with “Spirit” and “Lord:” and the manner in which these two titles are unquestionably applied, puts, beyond all reasonable doubt, the manner in which the third is to be applied also.

As, therefore, the titles, “Lord and Spirit,” are appropriated respectively to the second and third Persons of the Trinity, but cannot be intended in exclusion of the Father: so the title God is, indeed, appropriated here to Him, but cannot be intended in exclusion of His

Son and His Holy Spirit; more especially when one of the texts sets forth the Son, as that “one” rightful and supreme “Lord by whom are all things,” as the coadjutor of the Father in the creation and government of the world; and when the third Person is called the “one Spirit,” and, in distinction from the Father, Himself a spirit, is called eminently and absolutely The Spirit.

4. We come now to the fourth description of texts, consisting, namely, of those which are held to ascribe to the Father exclusively some of the attributes of the Godhead. The first of these which I shall examine, is the question of our blessed Saviour; “Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God.” Upon this passage, the argument of our opponents, divested of all colouring, and reduced to strict form, as well as we can so reduce it, is: He who is not good, is not God: our Saviour is not good; and therefore is not God. Such indeed, if it have any meaning, is their argument in

^a Matt. xix. 17.

simple truth; and it need only be thus stated to the most unlettered, but sincere, Christian, to ensure his immediate condemnation of it. For may he not exclaim with just indignation, The Saviour of unworthy and miserable sinners not good! He who came to bless us, with the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come; who, when we were “in darkness and the shadow of death, did humble Himself even to the death upon the cross, that He might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life^b!” Who, that has a spark of true Christian faith, could repress his indignation against the detestable blasphemy? What more could be requisite to prove, that the cause which employs such an argument is not good; that it is the cause of none other than of Antichrist; and that the arguments by which it is supported, how plausible soever they may be, are but the illusions of him, who, as occasion serves, can “transform himself into an angel of light?” Na-

^b Communion Service.

^c 2 Cor. xi. 14.

turally enough do they, who urge such an argument, believe that our Saviour is no more than a sinful man ; but well may our Church use the most solemn and anxious endeavours to guard her members against a cause, “ the weapons of whose warfare^d” are of such a temper, and so poisoned.

Nevertheless, we will not place our dissent from the argument, even upon this footing : for it might be replied, that, in doing so, we appealed to mere prejudice ; that we have our Saviour’s own words against us ; and that the disciples need not be solicitous to attribute qualities or titles to their Master, which He Himself disclaimed. A closer examination, however, will justify the presumption, by plain proof, of the unsoundness of this argument.

Most unquestionably, He who is not good, cannot be God : and it would be impossible to overturn the conclusion in denial of our Saviour’s Godhead, if it were also true that “ He declines the appellation good.” To His own words, therefore, we

^d 2 Cor. x. 4.

appeal. But before we make a more minute inspection of them, we may be permitted to ask : when the Scriptures speak of good men^e, and good works or deeds done by them^f; is it probable that He, who challenged His bitterest enemies^g, and the great accuser himself^h, to convict Him of sin ; whom the Father, by a voice from heaven, pronounced to be “ His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleasedⁱ;” who declared “ every one that loved father or mother more than Him to be unworthy of Him^k;” who “ did all things whatsoever the Father did^l;” and required that “ all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father^m;” would disclaim the quality even of perfect goodness, whether offered to Him, in His personal, or in His official, character? Or, is it probable that He, who was “ full of grace and truthⁿ;” who is “ the way, and the truth, and the life^o;”

^e Matt. v. 45; xii. 35; xxv. 21; Luke xxiii. 50; Acts xi. 24; 1 Pet. ii. 18. ^f Acts ix. 36; Rom. ii. 10; Eph. ii. 10; vi. 6; 1 Tim. ii. 10; v. 10. ^g John viii. 46. ^h John xiv. 30. ⁱ Matt. iii. 17. ^k Matt. x. 37. ^l John v. 19. ^m John v. 23. ⁿ John i. 14. ^o John xiv. 6.

who was accredited by the Father as His beloved Son, whom men should hear^p; who “spake even as the Father had said unto Him^q; who “commended the Apostles for naming Him their Lord and their Master,” and told them that “one was their Master, even Christ^s;” who called Himself the “good Shepherd^t,” and thus assumed a title even more comprehensive than that which He appropriates to God alone; would decline the appellation of good master, which the young ruler gave to Him? It may be pronounced morally certain that He would not do thus; and therefore nothing but the plainest and most unequivocal evidence can establish the contrary for a matter of fact.

But in vain is such evidence sought for in our Lord’s words. His inquiry, “Why callest thou me good?” does not afford any proof that He disowned the appellation: for, if the words be taken as a simple question, meaning no more than what they formally express, they neither directly nor

^p Matt. xvii. 5.

^q John xii. 50.

^r John xiii. 13.

^s Matt. xxiii. 10.

^t John x. 11.

indirectly affirm or deny any thing whatever on the subject ; but only ask the young man's reasons for addressing our Lord as he did : and therefore, unless it can be shewn, that to ask the reason of a thing, is necessarily to deny its existence, or truth, or fitness, the words before us can no more be proposed for evidence of our Lord's declining the title, than His argument and question, “ David calleth Christ Lord ; and whence is He then his Son^u? ” could be proposed as evidence that Christ was not a descendant of David. Or if the words be taken figuratively, that is, as expressive of astonishment or displeasure ; as intended, for instance, to reprove either the application of the title to our Lord at all, or the inconsistency of the young man with himself in making that application : then the real meaning of the words can be discovered only in their context, and in corresponding parts of Scripture. But, in considering the probability of our Lord's declining the title of good master, we have seen, that corresponding parts of Scripture

^u Mark xii. 37.

do not, and we shall see also that the context does not, permit us to ascribe to our Lord any design of reproving the application of the title to Himself; and therefore, as has been said, His inquiry does not, in any way, prove that He disowned that title.

Neither, again, does it confirm the alleged disclaimer, that our Lord says, “None is good but God :” for the question at issue is, whether our Lord Himself is or is not God ; and therefore to infer that our Lord is not good, because “none is good but God,” were to take for granted, while it yet remains to be proved, that He is not God.

But here, a writer, in high repute with the Unipersonalists, objects, that He, whom alone our Saviour has taught us to call good, is one person only, that is, the Father : and the inference from this would necessarily be, that our blessed Saviour both shewed that He is not God, and refused to be called good. The writer alluded to paraphrases the words thus : “none is good but one person, that is,

God; for so," he asserts, "the term for one in the original necessarily signifies^x." But this assertion he has utterly failed to substantiate; inasmuch as he supports it by nothing better than a criticism, which perhaps no one who had not forgotten almost the rudiments of the original language, and its rules of grammatical resolution, would have ventured to propose.

Since, then, we have proved the adverse interpretation to be wholly groundless, we shall go on to seek the right one. "A certain ruler," as we learn from a comparison of the Gospel, "came running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, saying, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God."^y

It is not unusual, indeed, to explain these last words to mean, "none is primarily good but the Father;" and then to reason, that though our Lord disclaims the title in this sense, yet being proved from other

^x Clarke, Scrip. Doct. c. i. §. 1. ^y Matt. xix. 16, &c. Mark x. 17, &c. Luke xviii. 18.

Scriptures to be “the only-begotten Son of God, very God of very God^z,” He is perfectly good, by communication from, and union with, the Father. But our Lord did not disclaim the title: nor was He spoken to, as primarily good; and therefore to interpret His answer in this sense, were to make it appear both captious and irrelevant, an exception to that courteous but serious benevolence, which He generally manifested, and which neither the address nor the character of this young man was calculated to check.

Our Lord was merely accosted as a good master to teach how eternal life was to be obtained. That the appellation was given with sincerity, is evident: for if it had been given hypocritically, He who well knew the hearts of men, and in this case evinced so thorough a perception of the individual’s disposition, would neither have spared the denunciation, “thou hypocrite,” nor have invited him to become a follower. Hypocrisy would have been inconsistent with the manner of the young

^z Nicene Creed.

man's life "from his youth up," with the eagerness with which he came, and the sorrow with which he departed, and would have repressed the first risings of that affection, with which "Jesus beholding him, loved him." But from one of his rank and office, being "a ruler," most probably, of a synagogue, or a member of the great council of the Jews^a, the title "good master," in connection with such an inquiry as he made, implied either an undue deference to human authority, a readiness to receive "for doctrines the commandments of men^b," and a low estimation of God's word; or an acknowledgment that Jesus was divinely inspired, and was authorized to propose new terms of salvation. That the latter was not the case, the whole tenor of the narrative plainly shews. Nor does the young ruler attempt to vindicate the manner of his address, by professing that Jesus was "a teacher come from God^c:" but "when he had heard" the words of our Saviour, "he went away, sorrowful" indeed, but no otherwise sor-

^a Macknight in loc.

^b Matt. xv. 9.

^c John iii. 2.

rowful than is easily accounted for by the heart-searching precept he had received, and the disappointment he had thus experienced.

The young ruler addressed Jesus, therefore, as a teacher, wiser, it may be, than the Rabbins of his time, but possessed of no higher authority than they had: and the answer of our Lord, as meant, not equivocally, but in good faith, is to this purpose; “ why callest thou me a good master, to teach thee how thou mayest have eternal life; since thou thinkest me no greater than others? no master is good to teach what thou desirest, but one master, God.” And then, instead of speaking of the perfections of God, the comparative unworthiness of all other beings, the imperfections of our best thoughts and deeds, or the inability of man to do any “ good thing” without Divine help; of some one or other of which He would naturally, perhaps certainly, have spoken, if His meaning had been, that “ none is perfectly good but one person, God:” He immediately refers the inquirer to the commandments,

those practical instructions which God, the only good teacher of the way to eternal life, had given for the attainment of that object. “Thou knowest the commandments; and if thou wilt enter into life, keep them.”

For so far, the narrative is not, in any way, opposed to our doctrine. Let us examine, whether, being “not against us,” it is not also “on our part^d. ” “The young man answered, and said unto Him, Master, all these things have I kept from my youth up. What lack I yet?” Now, what are the conduct and reply of our Lord? Does He, in pursuance of an intention to ascribe goodness to the Father alone, charge the speaker with self-righteous assumption? We are told, that “Jesus beholding him, loved him.” Does He speak of the “exceeding breadth of the commandment^e,” the perfect purity of the Divine word^f? Nay: He adds a new commandment of His own, and says, “one thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor; and thou

^d Mark ix. 40. ^e Ps. cxix. 96. ^f Ibid. 40.

shalt have treasure in heaven.” He takes upon Himself the office of teaching the way to eternal life. He does not expound the law; or, like the Baptist^g, apply it to the circumstances of the individual, who sought His advice: but He adds to the law, to the words of the only good Teacher, and does not, like inferior messengers of revelation, preface the addition with, “ thus saith the Lord;” or introduce it with an intimation, that He made it by any other authority than His own. Instead of depreciating His own pretensions, and rating them as those of a mere inspired or sinful man: instead of leaving the young ruler to settle the matter between God and his conscience, and of withdrawing Himself individually from consideration; He virtually proposed Himself as a teacher, whose authority was equal to that, by which the law had been established; whose goodness was so great, whose promises so sure and stedfast, as to entitle Him to invite the young ruler’s attendance on His own person, even at

* Luke iii. 10—14.

the sacrifice of every thing he possessed or held dear in this world, and at the risk of a most agonizing and shameful death. “ If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come;—take up thy cross; and—follow—ME.” And what is this, but to assume the very eminence and perfection, which He has been injuriously said to have disdained; the character to which alone He directed the young man for satisfaction? He makes Himself the good Master or Teacher; as, indeed, He also does in another place already quoted, where He says, “ one is your Master, even Christ;” and thus He supplies us with the following argument, in contradiction to that which we have been examining: The only good teacher of the way to eternal life is God: our Lord is a good teacher of this way; and therefore our “ Lord, He is God.”

In a second text of this class, our Lord Jesus Christ, addressing the Father, says, “ This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ

whom thou hast sent^h:" and it is argued by a conspicuous Unitarian writer, that " if these words are to be taken in their plain and unequivocal sense, no other" person " can be really and truly God, as the Father is God :" and " if the Father is the only true God, neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost can be truly Godⁱ."

But this reasoning is altogether fallacious: for if we translate it into the language employed by our blessed Saviour, the argument will stand thus; " if the Father is the only true God, the Father only is the true God, and therefore neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost is true God ;" and in this way, any doctrine however monstrous, absurd, or impious, may be proved from the Scriptures of holiness and truth.

Or if we reduce this reasoning to the strict form and order of argument, we shall both prove it to be fallacious, and discover where the fallacy lies. For the argument strictly is: " the Father is the only true God ; but the Son and the Holy Ghost are

^h John xvii. 3.
John xvii. 3.

ⁱ Carpenter's Proof from Scrip-

ture, &c. page 1.

not the Father ; and therefore they are not the true God.” Now that the Father is the only true God, both our Saviour’s words, and the whole authority of Scripture, prove ; and that the Son and the Holy Ghost are not the same person as the Father, we maintain : but it does not by any means follow, that, when the Father is, the Son and the Holy Ghost are not, the true God ; unless it be first proved that the Godhead is of no more than one person, that is, that the Father only is the true God : for if the Godhead be, as we believe, of three persons, then the name of the only true God, in its full extent, comprehends as well the second and third Persons, as the first. In order, therefore, to establish the validity of the argument before us, the Unipersonalist will find it necessary to prove, that the propositions, “ the Father is the only true God,” and, “ the Father only is the true God,” are equivalent to each other ; and that our Saviour’s words, “ that they might know thee the only true God,” must be interpreted as if He had said, “ that they

might know thee only to be the true God.” But when the Unipersonalist shall have done so, he will have fallen upon a method, by which the Scriptures may be made to speak any language the interpreter may desire, and by which “they that are unlearned and unstable” may even follow “them to their own destruction^k.”

Yet if it were even demonstrated, that the Father only is the true God, it would not follow that the Son and the Holy Ghost are not the true God; unless it be first shewn that they are not so united with the Father, that whatsoever may be said of Him as God, may be said of them also. And in order to prove that the Three Persons are not so united with each other, it must first be proved that the Son and the Holy Ghost are not truly God: for their mutual union is maintained on the grounds, that if the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and if there is but One God; then these three are one. So that, on the whole, before the words of our blessed Lord can

^k 2 Peter iii. 16.

be converted into a proof that neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit is the true God, the Unipersonalist must first prove that they are not the true God; and before the words can be converted into a proof of the personal unity of the Godhead, that same personal unity must be first proved.

The heterodox argument, then, being so completely fallacious, it may perhaps be asked, how the words of our blessed Saviour are to be reconciled with the doctrine of the Trinity. To this I answer, that nothing but a plain and palpable mistake could ever have led any one, who was acquainted with that doctrine, to imagine that it is in the least degree opposed to our Saviour's words. The mistake has been shewn to consist in the mental transposition of the word "only;" as if we read, "that they might know thee only to be the true God," instead of "that they might know thee, the only true God." And these words are no more applicable to the present controversy, than any other passage which speaks of the Father merely as God, or which teaches us that there is

one God, and none other besides Him. For we do not say that there is another God: on the contrary, we maintain, and, as I have before said, it is the very foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity, that there is one only living and true God. To be God, therefore, is to be the only true God; and consequently, if the Father is God, He is the only true God; if the Son is God, He is the only true God; if the Holy Ghost is God, He is the only true God: for otherwise, they would be three Gods, and not one only. And no contradiction, absurdity, or inconsistency can be discovered in this, until it is proved that God is of one person, only, singly, and exclusively; which I trust I have shewn, and, in the little which now remains of this discourse, shall shew, that Scripture does not prove.

5. In our last division of the texts on which reliance is placed for proof of the personal unity of God, we find the following: “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore,

knoweth that I lie not¹ ;” and, “ the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, give unto you the spirit of wisdom^m. ”

Now, if we believed that our Lord Jesus Christ is God only, and not both God and man, these texts might be urged with some appearance of plausibility against us : but when we recollect that He is as truly man, as He is God, and when we consider the peculiar manner of His incarnation, it is impossible for us to see any real difficulty in these, or any other similar texts. For as He is man, God is His God and Father, as well as ours : and as He was conceived by “ the power of the Highestⁿ, ” He is peculiarly the Son of God ; and therefore God is peculiarly His God and Father. This distinction He Himself constantly observed : and He especially marks it, when He says ; “ I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God^o. ”

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 31.

^m Eph. i. 17.

ⁿ Luke i. 35.

^o John xx. 17.

Nor does it, in the least, militate against the doctrine of our Saviour's Godhead, and consequently of the Trinity, that God is thus "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," unless it can be proved, that the union of the divine and human natures in one person is impossible: and this is a task, which the Bible affords no means of accomplishing, and which must ever in this world be too difficult for our limited understanding to attempt with any reasonable hopes of success.

Having, then, thus at large examined the objection, that the doctrine of the Trinity is opposed to the first principles of natural and revealed religion; having enquired to what extent, and in what sense, the unity of God is proved under both these heads; and having found that neither nature, nor reason, nor Scripture, yields any support to the doctrine of the personal unity of the Godhead; we come with full certainty to the conclusion, that the doctrine of the Trinity is not opposed to the first principles either of natural or of revealed religion. And we cannot close this length-

ened investigation more appropriately, than by quoting a remarkable passage from the book of Isaiah : a passage, which St. Paul, on two occasions^p, expressly applies to Christ ; and the evident meaning of which, requires that application : a passage, which, while it declares the unity of the Godhead in the most unqualified terms, presents, at the same time, a most compendious and decisive answer to those, who urge that unity as an objection against the supreme Deity of Christ, and therein, against the general doctrine which we have been endeavouring to vindicate. “ Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient times? who hath told it from that time? Have not I, the Lord? and there is no God else beside me; a just God, and a Saviour: there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every

^p Rom. xiv. 10, 11; and Phil. ii. 10, 11.

knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength : even to Him shall men come ; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory^{q.}"

To Him, therefore, "in none other than whom is there any salvation^{r.};" to Him, the just God and the Saviour, let us bow our knees : and to Him, with the Almighty Father, and the infinite Spirit, which "searcheth even the deep things of God ;" three Persons in one Divine Majesty ; be ascribed, as is most due, all honour and glory, all dominion and praise, now and for ever. Amen, and Amen.

^{q.} Isa. xlvi. 21—25.

^{r.} Acts iv. 12.

S E R M O N IV.

GEN. iii. 22.

*And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become
as one of us.*

FROM our review, and, I would hope, not unsatisfactory refutation, of the objections to the doctrine of the Trinity, we now proceed, with advantage, to draw a general outline, or compendium, of the evidence on which that doctrine is established.

That the Trinity in Unity is mysterious, we readily admit: maintaining it to be, at the same time, sufficiently intelligible, so far as necessary, for all practical purposes. We affirm from the nature of the case, that it must be mysterious: and have shewn, that the same reasons which would make this a ground of valid exception to our doctrine, would also introduce universal scepticism and disbelief.

From its admitted and necessary mysteriousness it next follows, that the co-existence of three Persons in one Divine nature, as taught by our doctrine, cannot be proved to be impossible or contradictory. But against those who deny its mysteriousness, and persist in the objections of impossibility and contradiction, it has been shewn, that the foundations on which these objections are built, will not support them: that, on the contrary, as far as, with our imperfect knowledge and capacity, we may reason on such a subject, the existence of a plurality of persons in the Godhead in a general view, may from analogy, and from the most accurate notions of what is necessary to constitute a person, be presumed to be possible: that in a more particular view, such a Trinity and Unity as our doctrine teaches, is possible; since it sets forth the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as no otherwise persons, than is consistent with their perfect unity of being; and yet as no otherwise united, than is consistent with the distinct personality of each: and

that, specifically, the Unity of the Godhead, as it is to be learned from natural and revealed religion, is not repugnant to, but is consistent with, the Trinity of Persons.

This, then, is the advantageous ground on which we now stand: the Trinity in Unity is mysterious, but is not therefore to be disbelieved: it is not impossible, and therefore may be believed on competent evidence attesting and corroborating the fact: the Unity is not opposed to the Trinity, and therefore the Unity of the Godhead is such as our doctrine represents it to be. Moreover again, the Trinity in Unity is not impossible, neither is the one opposed to the other; and therefore all those interpretations of the evidence, which depend on the assumption of these objections, are refuted in the mass, and disposed of without further trouble.

We proceed now with our review of the evidence on which the doctrine of the Trinity is received: and we shall distribute it under the two general heads, of that which the Old Testament, and that which the New, respectively afford; the former

head to be comprised in the present, the latter in the three succeeding discourses.

That there is a plurality of persons in the Godhead, appears from these passages : “ God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness^a;” and “ the Lord said, Let us go down, and there confound their language^b. ” It is objected, indeed, that these are only majestic or dramatic expressions, after the manner of earthly potentates, and signify nothing more than “ I will make,” and “ I will go down;” or, that if they do signify a plurality of persons, they were addressed to a council of angels. But it cannot be denied, that the literal and natural import of the terms signifies two or more individuals capable of hearing and understanding, of willing and acting, and, be it observed, of creating also, that is to say, of Divine persons : and doubtless, this import is not to be set aside by assertions which are not only unwarranted, but opposed, by fact, by common sense, and by every consideration of probability. There are no traces of princes

^a Gen. i. 26.

^b Ibid. xi. 6, 7.

using this form of expression, for at least a thousand years after the time of Moses : all the cases recorded in this period are precisely the reverse : and it is therefore absurd to pretend, that Moses followed the alleged custom in writing the book of Genesis. That the plural is conceived by any to be a more majestic mode of expression than the singular, is only because they are accustomed to its use by the great : but common sense tells us, that the use of the plural in such cases is an indirect confession of participated power, and, consequently, of some degree of individual weakness ; whereas the singular betokens autocracy. And where there is not a participation of power, the use of the plural by the great is, in truth, an affectation of humility. Nor does it less evidently derogate from the attributes and majesty of the Creator, and disagree with that jealousy with which He ever guards His honour, to represent Him as inviting the suffrages, advice, or assistance, of the creature, in His own peculiar work.

But, as if it were intended to cut off all

such pretences, it is written, that “the Lord God” also “said, Behold, the man is become as one of us^c:” an expression which undeniably requires us to understand several persons, with whom He numbers Himself: and the supposition of a council of angels is directly contradicted by His own indignant questions: “Who hath stood in the counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard His word^d? ” “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? with whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and shewed Him the way of understanding^e? ” “Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the heavens by myself^f. ”

That the literal meaning of those passages, in which God speaks of Himself in

^c Gen. iii. 23. ^d Jer. xxiii. 18. ^e Isa. xl. 13, 14.

^f Isa. xliv. 24.

the plural number, is, as far as the present point is concerned, the true meaning; is further established by various texts, in which mention is distinctly made of two or more Divine Persons. Thus it is written; “The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven^g:” “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool^h:” “I, the Lord, will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their Godⁱ:” “I—will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in—His—name, saith the Lord^k:” “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters^l:” “Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for—my—mouth it hath commanded, and —His—Spirit it hath gathered them^m.” “Thus saith God the Lord,—He—that cre-

^g Gen. xix. 24. ^h Ps. cx. 1. ⁱ Hos. i. 4, 7.

^k Zech. x. 12. ^l Gen. i. 1, 2. ^m Isa. xxxiv. 16.

ated the heaven, and—they—that stretched them outⁿ.”

Another indication of this plurality is in the Hebrew word for God, which is found commonly in the plural form, connected with others, and especially with the name Jehovah or Lord, in the singular; sometimes with words in the plural as well as itself: and sometimes it occurs in the singular form: from which reasons it is certain, that the word has both numbers; that the use of it in the plural is not to be accounted for, as if it were barely an idiom of the language; that by such use, a plurality, and by the connection of the word with others in the singular, an unity, is intimated in the divine essence. In the first verse of the Bible we read: “God created the heavens and the earth;” where the original for “God” is in the plural, and that for “created” in the singular: as if we should say, “the Gods created:” using the word “Gods,” with a careful exclusion of any polytheistic meaning,

ⁿ Isa. xlii. 5. See the Hebrew.

and in remembrance of the indissoluble unity of the Godhead. The title of Lord God, so frequent throughout the Old Testament, is as literally as we can render it, so as to distinguish the numbers, “the Lord the Gods.” In the book of Joshua, the irresolute and wayward Israelites are told, that they “cannot serve the Lord, for He is the Holy Gods^o:” and Nehemiah, in his prayer, presents us with an instance of the singular, when he says, “Thou art a God ready to pardon^p. ”

So much, indeed, were the sacred writers habituated to the notion of a plurality of persons in the Godhead, that we find it occasionally manifested in their application of other plural words, which, according to ordinary use, do not maintain the same regard to the divine unity, with that which is observable in the word above noticed. Elihu laments that “none saith, Where is God my Makers^q:” Israel is exhorted to “rejoice in his Makers^r:” the widow is comforted with the assurance; “thy Makers

^o Joshua xxiv. 19. ^p Nehem. ix. 17. ^q Job xxxv. 10. ^r Ps. cxlix. 2.

are thy husbands^s : ” understanding is called “ the knowledge of the Holy Ones^t : ” Daniel is assured by a supernatural interpreter, that “ the saints of the Most High Ones shall take the kingdom^u ; ” “ the Lord, the redeemers,” expostulates with his people^x; and elsewhere asks, “ If I be Masters, where is my fear^y? ”

Nor is it unworthy of notice, that the frequent style, if it be nothing more than the style, of the Scriptures, has a most striking correspondence with the doctrine of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. We may take for example the ten Commandments; which are introduced with the declaration, “ I am the Lord thy God; ” the second of which continues the use of the first person; while in the third Commandment, the divine speaker proceeds: “ Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh—His—name in vain.” Thus again; “ When the Lord hath performed—His—whole work upon mount Zion

^s Isa. liv. 5.

^t Prov. ix. 10.

^u Dan. vii. 18.

^x Isa. xliv. 24.

^y Mal. i. 6.

and on Jerusalem,—I—will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria^z：“ I—will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state shall—He—pull thee down^a：“ Cause thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord, let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will—I—sit to judge all the heathen round about^b. ”

Since, then, it is clear, that Almighty God speaks of Himself as of several persons; that by His own words several persons, equal to, and one with, Himself, must be understood; and that distinct mention is made of several persons by His name and attributes; a plurality of persons in the Divine essence is plainly evinced: and this the more, when we find also, that the common appellation of God, with various titles occasionally ascribed to Him, comprehends the idea of that plurality; and that even the frequent style of the Scriptures harmonizes in the most remarkable manner with it.

But the plurality will be more fully

^z Isa. x. 12.

^a Ibid. xxii. 19.

^b Joel iii. 11, 12.

established, as we go on to contemplate the titles and attributes of each individual Person.

No evidence is demanded to prove the Godhead of the Father. Our opponents believe it equally with ourselves. He is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords, the supreme fountain of life, the giver of all goodness, the beginning and the end. Our attention will therefore be directed to inquire, what definite information the Scriptures give of any other Persons distinct from, and equal to, Him.

In this inquiry we proceed but a short way, when we meet with the following passage: “The Angel of the Lord said unto Hagar, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude.” And another communication to Sarah’s maid some years afterwards, is recorded in these words: “the Angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not: for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise,

^c Gen. xvi. 10.

lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand : for I will make him a great nation^d."

Now that God here means the Father ; and that the Angel of the Father was not,—as some, who love to " darken counsel by words without knowledge^e," have pretended,—merely " a visible symbol of the Divine presence," but a person distinct from the Father, cannot admit of the least dispute : and yet, that He who is here called the Angel of the Lord, and the Angel of God, is Lord also and God Himself, is manifest from His promises, " I—will multiply thy seed," " I—will make him a great nation ;" for this was to claim in His own person, the power and providence of the Most High. Such was the conviction of Hagar ; and of the inspired writer also, who says, that " she called the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me^f." And that their conviction was just, succeeding appearances of the same exalted person will prove.

The sacred history informs us, that " God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him,—

^d Gen. xxi. 17, 18. ^e Job xxxviii. 2. ^f Gen. xvi. 13.

Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest; and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of.” But when Abraham had come “to the place which God had told him of,—and stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son, the Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven,—and said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from—ME^{g.}”

Here it is evident, that the Angel speaks in His own person, and not as the mere temporary delegate or representative of another: that it was He, who appointed this most extraordinary trial; for whose satisfaction it was made; and to whom this most painful sacrifice was to be offered: for He says, “now I—know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from—ME.” And from the most explicit declarations of

* Gen. xxii. 1, 2, 9—12.

Scripture, as well as from their unvaried tenor, we know that it is the province of God alone, to “try the heart and the reins;” and that He alone is the proper object of our obedience and worship. The conclusion, therefore, is inevitable, that the Angel of the Lord is God.

To object that the Angel speaks of God, as of another than Himself, were to object one of the points most favourable to us in the present case. That He does speak thus, cannot be denied: but this proves that He speaks in His own person, not in a merely representative capacity; and that in His own person, He claims the divine attribute of trying the heart, and the honour of the most extraordinary and exalted act of religious obedience ever performed by man. That the word God is often used in Scripture, to signify the person of the Father, in a sense, not excluding, but comprehending, the Son and the Holy Spirit, has been on another occasion, I trust, satisfactorily proved^h: and thus it is, that the Angel here speaks of

^h Sermon III. pages 78, &c.

God as distinct from Himself, and yet describes Himself also as God.

We are not left, however, to infer the nature of this Angel, in a manner even so clear and certain : for in several instances, those to whom He appeared, ascribe to Him, and He appropriates directly to Himself, the most awful names of God. What Hagar and Moses believed Him to be, we have already seen. Jacob, in returning to his own country, prayed to Him, saying, “ O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy countryⁱ. ” On the next morning, after a mysterious conflict with the Angel, he said, “ I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved^k. ” The prophet Hosea tells us, “ By his strength, Jacob had power with God ; yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed : he wept, and made supplication unto him ; he found him in Bethel, and there He spake with us : even the Lord God of Hosts ; the Lord is his memorial^l. ” And shortly

ⁱ Gen. xxxii. 9. ^k Gen. xxxii. 30. ^l Hos. xii. 3—5.

before his death, the same patriarch blessed his son Joseph in these words ; “ God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads^m. ”

Again : “ the Angel of God spake unto Jacob, saying,—I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto meⁿ. ” At Bethel, He said, “ I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac^o. ” And at mount Horeb, “ the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush ;—and when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him, out of the midst of the bush, and said,—Draw not nigh hither ; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abra-

^m Gen. xlvi. 15, 16.

ⁿ Ibid. xxxi. 11—13.

^o Ibid. xxviii. 13.

ham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.—And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you ; and they shall say to me, What is His name ? What shall I say unto them ? And God said unto Moses, I am that I am^p.”

That it was the Angel who uttered the words, “ I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” and pronounced his name to be, “ I am that I am,” is evident. But to put it beyond the possibility of doubt, that the words were meant of Himself, let it be observed, that the sacred author says, “ The Angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses,—and Moses was afraid to look upon—God.” He therefore that appeared to Moses was God ; and under this name, as also that of the Lord, the Angel is represented throughout the narrative. The Angel Himself, moreover, went

^p Exod. iii. 2, 4—6, 13, 14.

on to say : “ Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you ; this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations^q. ” And, to crown these irrefragable testimonies, Moses was empowered to work three different miracles, to convince the children of Israel, that—he does not say an angel of God, any created messenger, but—“ the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” had—not sent an angel, but—“ appeared” Himself “ unto him^r. ”

Thus it appears from varied and decisive—the more decisive, because varied—testimony, that He, who, in the patriarchal dispensation, was the messenger of the Father to mankind, is Himself the Lord God : and it is therefore obvious, that He was called the Angel of the Lord, not to signify that He had the nature of any created angels, but to designate the office

^q Exod. iii. 5.

^r Exod. iv. 5, 6, 9.

which He condescended to bear under that dispensation.

In the Mosaic dispensation, which began with the vision at mount Horeb, He continued to execute the same gracious office; as we learn both from His own promises, and that of the Father, and also from other testimonies of the ancient Scriptures. In that vision He said, “I am come down to deliver my people out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey:” and, in a subsequent verse, He commands Moses to “gather the elders of the children of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers—hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt: and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.” At the

¹ Exod. iii. 16, 17.

giving of the law, the Almighty Father likewise promised, saying, “Behold I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of Him, and obey His voice; provoke Him not; for He will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in Him: but if thou shalt indeed obey His voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries. For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works; but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images. And ye shall serve the Lord your God, and—He—shall bless thy bread and thy water; and—I—will take sickness away from the midst of thee^t. ”

The fulfilment of these promises is con-

^t Exod. xxiii. 20—25.

firmed by the grateful acknowledgment of Isaiah, that “ the Lord was the Saviour of the house of Israel: in all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them; in His love and in His pity he redeemed them, and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old^u. ” And in yet later times, the Angel Himself, under that name which the prophet Hosea ascribes to Him, declares the same thing: “ Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; after the glory hath He sent me unto the nations which spoiled you: for He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of his eye. For, behold, I—will shake mine hand upon them :—and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me^w. ”

The proofs which these passages contain, of the Angel’s divine nature, are clear and satisfactory. In one passage, He is called the Angel of God’s presence, which, interpreted as it is by the promise, “ My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest^x, ” signifies Him, by whose mission

^u Isa. lxiii. 8, 9. ^w Zech. ii. 8, 9. See also iv. 8, 9.
^x Exod. xxxiii. 14.

and continuance with the Israelites, God Himself would be present with them, and give them rest: and this could not be by means of any created being. But how it was, is further explained by the word of God, that, “ His name,” not merely was called upon, or represented by the Angel, but was “ in Him.” In another passage, He is called the Lord of Hosts. In the promise of the Father to the Israelites, He is called the Lord their God, on whose blessing their sustenance depended: and such awe and obedience, such care not to offend, are enjoined towards Him, and enforced by such reasons, as can be reconciled only with His possession of Divine Majesty; more especially, as there follows a most solemn warning against the service of the heathen gods, and a repeated demand of service to Him.

On this point, however, after the evidence which has been already brought forward, we shall not now dwell; but, with the assistance of the passage last referred to, we shall bring that evidence to bear on another and most important point, the

identity of the Angel of the Old, with the Mediator of the New, covenant. The promise of the Father contains the substance of the covenant which He made with the children of Israel; and of this covenant the Angel was the agent on the Father's part. He was therefore the Angel or Messenger of the covenant. Now when this covenant was “ waxing old, and ready to vanish away,” another promise was given in these words: “ Behold, I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.” Who is meant by the expression, “ the Lord whom ye seek,” cannot possibly be mistaken: the name itself, and the forerunner to prepare the way, ascertain Him to be the promised and expected Messiah. But this future Deliverer is identified with that Angel, to whom they owed innumerable past favours; for it is said, “ The Lord whom ye seek,

^y Heb. viii. 13.

^{*} Mal. iii. 1.

even the Messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in.” The union of these two offices in the same person, may be proved from other testimonies also; but in addition to this, it shall suffice to quote the words of the Angel Himself, as delivered to us by the prophet Zechariah: “ Lo—I—come; and I will dwell in the midst of thee,—saith the Lord :—and many shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee.”^a On the promised Mediator of the New covenant, therefore, is reflected, in its full force, all the evidence which establishes the Godhead of the Angel of the Old.

And here a striking coincidence presents itself. A principal characteristic of the Messiah was, that He should be of the human race; and wherever the Scriptures mention the form in which the Angel of the Lord appeared, it is that of a man. When He wrestled with Jacob, and when He appeared to Joshua before the capture of

^a Zech. ii. 10, 11.

Jericho, He is called a man : while on the former occasion, Hosea accords to Him, as we recollect, the title of “ the Lord God of Hosts ;” and on the latter, He claimed those marks of honour which He had formerly claimed from Moses, and which are due to God alone^b.

But the proof of the Messiah’s divine nature, does not depend on our being able to shew from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, that He is the same person with Him, who, in the dispensations preceding His actual manifestation in the flesh, was the bearer of the Father’s will, and the agent of His gracious purposes toward mankind. The establishment of that identity, is chiefly useful to us here, in enabling us to apply to Him, as one person, the testimonies which are rendered to His Godhead under both offices ; and these testimonies we shall find to be not less clear and strong under the later, than under the earlier, office.

The native place and the birth of the Messiah, are thus predicted ; “ Thou,

^b Josh. v. 13—15.

Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel ; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting^c : ” “ Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and the government shall be upon His shoulders : and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace^d. ” These texts do not call for any remark : no just translation, no plausible interpretation, nor various reading, can be given of them, which shall make them applicable to any, but one partaking of the Divine essence.

When about to assume the functions of His office, “ a voice crieth before Him in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God : ” and Jerusalem, bringing the good tidings, is exhorted to “ lift up her voice with strength, and to say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God.” For, it is added, “ Behold, the

^c Micah v. 2.

^d Isa. ix. 6.

Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him : behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him : He shall feed His flock like a shepherd ; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young^e.” It cannot be doubted, that the plain and natural application of these passages is to the advent of the Messiah, which they speak of as the advent of the Lord God; and the equally plain and natural conclusion is, that the Messiah is here denominated by that incommunicable name.

It is objected, however, that the advent of the Messiah is represented as the advent of the Lord God, not because He is entitled to that name, but because He is “ the great Messenger of God^f.” But let us review these passages. A forerunner proclaims the approach of the Lord. Jerusalem, aware of the glad event, is invited to point Him out to the nation at large, and to say, “ Behold your God.” Are not these words as expressive as any can be,

^e Isa. xl. 3, 9—11. ^f Belsham’s Calm Inquiry, p. 218.

of the visible and personal appearance of the Most High? Yet to render this the more certain, it is immediately added, in confirmation and explanation of the words assigned to Jerusalem, “Behold, the Lord God will come.” The titles Lord and God, used separately before, are now joined together, as if the more fully and solemnly to denote the rank of the gracious visitant.—Behold He shall come with such power and goodness, as shall infallibly demonstrate His person, and enable those “who looked for redemption in Jerusalem,” to say with confidence, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad, and rejoice in His salvation.” Such is the natural meaning of the place, taken by itself alone. But when we remember that He, whose coming is thus predicted, is that wondrous Person, “whose going forth has been from of old, from everlasting;” and who, on His manifestation in the flesh, was to be called “the Mighty God,” “God with us,” we feel

^s Isa. xxv. 9.

the most perfect confidence in accepting the natural as the true meaning.

Nor is our confidence decreased, when we read the accounts which the Messiah, in prophecy, delivers of Himself. “The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name. And He said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth^h. ” These are incontestably the words of the Messiah. But in the preceding chapter these are His words also: “Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel, my called; I am He: I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call upon them, they stand up together.—Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning: from the time that it was, there am

^h Isa. xlix. 1, 6.

I: and now the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent meⁱ."

In describing the objects of His mission, He says, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because He hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek,—to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God^k;" while in the verse just before, and in another subsequent, He takes to Himself the name of Jehovah, saying, "I the Lord will hasten it in His time^l;" "I the Lord love judgment; I hate robbery for burnt offering^m."

To the same effect are some places predictive of the Messiah's death and exaltation. In one we read: "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man who is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hostsⁿ." The Shepherd is evidently the Messiah; and He is called the fellow of the Lord of Hosts. There is indeed some doubt as to the exact meaning of the original word; but there can be none, as to the conse-

ⁱ Isa. xlvi. 12, 13, 16. ^k Ibid. lxi. 1, 2. ^l Ibid. lx. 22. ^m Ibid. lxi. 8. ⁿ Zech. xiii. 7.

quences which any meaning consistent with the use of the language will authorize. The expression rendered “my fellow,” is strictly idiomatic, and signifies equality, or similarity, or nearness of nature, condition, attributes, or privileges. If, then, we adopt the first meaning, the consequence establishing the Divinity of the Messiah is immediate: or if we adopt any of the other meanings; there is one more, but that an inevitable, step in the argument; for equality, or similarity, or nearness, of condition, attributes, or privileges, necessarily proves equality, or similarity, or nearness, of nature; which cannot be predicated of any created being in comparison with God, infinite and most high. But the Godhead of the Messiah is yet more directly proved from another prophecy of this kind, where the Lord, Jehovah, speaking of the Jews in the last days, declares, “they shall look on me whom they have pierced^o;” and thus shews that He Himself is the Messiah.

Then, again, we have the Psalmist speaking of, and addressing, Him in these words:

^o Zech. xii. 4, 10.

“The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool^p:” and, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre: thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows^q. ”

Thus, therefore, if words have any meaning, if language has any use, except to be perverted by caprice or prejudice, we have proved, by a series of the most convincing testimonies, the existence of a second Person in the Godhead, equal to, and distinct from, the Father. Each of these testimonies we have examined generally on its own merits; and therefore, if any doubt remains as to the interpretation we have given to one, that doubt cannot reasonably withstand the concurrent authority of the rest.

The question now comes before us; In what relation does this second Person stand to the first? There is but one God; and,

^p Ps. cx. 1.

^q Ps. xlv. 6, 7.

therefore, the relation of these two Persons to each other must be of the most intimate and essential kind. We remember, indeed, the words of the Messiah in the second Psalm; “I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee:” but this evidently applies only to the relation which the Messiah bears in His human nature to the Father. Yet since there are no relations known to us, conceivable of the Supreme, consistent with His unity, and so intimate and essential as those of Son and Spirit; and since we shall find that there is another Divine Person denominated by the latter name; we conclude, that, as far as, with the humility becoming our ignorance, we may venture to judge on so high a subject, the Second Person bears to the First the relation of Son in His divine nature also. To prove this, however, as a matter of fact, we have not sufficient means from the Old Testament, to which our inquiries are at present confined; though there is one passage in the prophecy of Isaiah, which approaches very nearly to

the point: “ Now will I sing to my well-beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill; and He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.—For the vineyard of the Lord of Hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.” It is obvious, that the Lord of Hosts here spoken of, is the Angel of the Covenant, the future Messiah; who took so great and continued care of Israel: and the term “ beloved,” applied to Him by the Divine Speaker, may be justly accepted as equivalent to Son. Still I acknowledge, that the passage is not sufficiently decisive to be

^r Isa. v. 1—3, 7.

proposed, singly, as proof of our point ; and I do not wish to draw from it any inference, further than that it may be fairly looked upon, as imparting a considerable degree of probability and confidence to our precedent speculation. Beyond this we are not at this time concerned to go ; and we shall, therefore, leave the decision of the question to the authority and the greater light of the New Testament.

It now remains for us to produce the evidence of the Old Testament, for our belief of a Third Person in the Godhead. This is the Holy Spirit : and we have to shew that He is a person ; that He is distinct from the Father ; and that He is God. But before we proceed to do this, we must observe, that, as the dispensation of the Spirit was a matter of promise under the Old Testament to be fulfilled in the New, and “ the Holy Ghost was not given” until “ Jesus was glorified^s, ” the evidence to be here adduced for our belief in Him, though clear and conclusive, is yet not copious.

With respect, then, to the first of the three points now before us, namely, the personality of the Holy Spirit;—the sacred historian informs us, that, at the creation, “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters^t. ” Now nothing is capable of motion but substance, material or immaterial. But that at this stage of the universe, there was any material substance which could be denominated Spirit, is not only destitute of all proof, but tacitly contradicted by the history itself. It remains, therefore, that it was an immaterial substance, which moved upon the face of the waters. And as we have no idea of any immaterial substance without intelligence, and that in which intelligence resides is either a person, or distinguishable into persons, and it will not be contended that the latter property pertains to the Spirit; it follows that the Holy Spirit is a person.

Again, we know, that to speak and to be vexed, are personal properties: and these are attributed to the Spirit; for we are told by Ezekiel, that “the Spirit entered

^t Gen. i. 2.

into him, and set him on his feet, and spake unto him ; and said, I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth ; but when I shall speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God^u.'' And Isaiah, describing the conduct of the Israelites in return for the unwearied care and kindness of the Lord, says, that " they rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit^x." In arrest, however, of the legitimate conclusion from these premises, affirming the personality of the Holy Spirit, it is pleaded, that personal properties may be attributed to the Spirit either figuratively or literally; that when they are attributed in the former manner, they cannot prove personality ; and when in the latter, God the Father is meant. But without entering into the merits of this objection at present, as we shall hereafter have a better opportunity ; it is completely overthrown by that single text, in which the Messiah announces, that " the Lord God and His Spirit hath sent Him^y." To send the Messiah is a

^u Ezek. iii. 24. ^x Isa. lxiii. 10. ^y Ibid. xlviij. 16.

strictly personal action : and this is here ascribed to the Holy Spirit, equally with, and distinctly from, the Father. There is no room for saying that the Spirit here means a quality, attribute, or energy of the Godhead; for if the Spirit were any of these, then it were comprehended in the name of the Lord God, and the Messiah would not have said, “ the Lord God—and—His Spirit.” The Spirit, therefore, is a person ; and that He is not to be taken for the Father, is plain from His being mentioned in addition to, and distinctly from, Him.

This second point, the distinctness of the Spirit from the Father, receives yet more direct testimony from the address of the Psalmist, “ Thou sendest forth thy Spirit ; they are created, and thou renewest the face of the earth^z:” for it is impossible that one should send himself ; he that is sent is necessarily to be conceived distinct from him that sends. But were there no other proof, the name alone of the Third Person were sufficient. He is called the Spirit of God ; and as we do not imagine

^z Psalm civ. 30.

that the spirit of a man is the man himself, but only an integral part of him ; so it can no more be affirmed that the Spirit of God the Father is He, whose Spirit He is ; but that He is, if we may so speak, an integral subsistence in His nature. And here we are brought to the third point, which is, that

The Holy Spirit is God. Of this, the relation which He bears to the Father, denoted by the name, the Spirit of God, is, as has been before shewn, a most decisive proof. His possession of creative power and omnipresence, and, therefore, of the Divine nature, we learn from the declaration of Job : “ The Spirit of God hath made me^a;” and from the inquiry of the Psalmist, “ Whither shall I go from thy Spirit^b? ” David also, in his last words, calls Him the God of Israel, affirming, “ The Spirit of God spake by me, and his word was in my tongue ; the God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me^c. ” And we remember, that, in the passage above quoted from the book of Ezekiel,

^a Job xxxiii. 4. ^b Ps. cxxxix. 7. ^c 2 Sam. xxiii. 2, 3.

the Spirit Himself said, “ When I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God.”

These testimonies, though few in number, are yet sufficient to prove with certainty the distinct Personality and Godhead of the Spirit: and thus we are brought to the conclusion, that the Scriptures of the Old Testament teach us to believe in the existence of two other Persons with the Father, in the unity of the Divine essence.

But it may be asked, Did the ancient Jews, who were so much better acquainted with the language of the Old Testament than we are, perceive this doctrine in it? To this the reply is obvious, that were the question to be answered in the negative, the mistakes of the Jews with respect to the Messiah would be an ample vindication for our declining to submit to their judgment. Yet it is satisfactory to say, that the doctrine of the ancient Jews not only fully coincides with the conclusions we have deduced from the Old Testament, but in some respects even goes farther.

In the Apocryphal books, we find the following passages. “ I called upon the Lord, the Father of my Lord^d. ” “ Thine Almighty Word leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction, and brought thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword^e. ” “ Thou didst send forth thy Spirit, and it created them^f. ”

One of the Targums, which, as perhaps most of my hearers know, were brief expositions of the Scriptures, in the dialect spoken by the Jews after the captivity, thus paraphrases part of the forty-fifth Psalm : “ Thy beauty, O King Messiah, is pre-eminent among the sons of men : the spirit of prophecy is given into thy lips : therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.—The throne of thy glory, O Jehovah,”—(the incommunicable name)—“ standeth for ever and ever ; a righteous sceptre is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Because thou hast loved righteousness and hated wickedness, therefore thus hath Jehovah thy God

^d Ecclus. li. 10. ^e Wisd. xviii. 15, 16. ^f Judith xvi. 14.

anointed thee with the ointment of joy above thine associates.”

And lastly, in other Jewish writings, we find the following among many testimonies. “ That Angel,” (who appeared to Joshua,) “ to speak the truth, is the Angel Redeemer: of whom it is written, ‘ For my name is in him :’ He, I say, is the Angel, who spake to Jacob; ‘ I am the God of Bethel :’ He, of whom it is said; ‘ God called unto Moses out of the midst of the bush.’ Now He is called the Angel, because He governs the world. For it is written, ‘ Jehovah (that is, the Lord God) brought us forth out of Egypt.’ And in another place, ‘ He sent His Angel, and brought us forth out of Egypt.’ Moreover it is written: ‘ And the Angel of His presence saved them.’ That Angel, doubtless, who is the presence of God: of whom it is said; ‘ My presence shall go with you, and give you rest.’ That Angel, finally, of whom the prophet: ‘ And the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple; the Angel of the covenant whom ye delight in^g.’”

* Masius on Josh. v. 14. in the Critici Sacri.

The text, “ Hear, O Israel : The Lord our God is one Lord^b;” is thus rendered by another author : “ The Lord, and our God, and the Lord, are one.” And in his comment, he says ; “ The Lord, or Jehovah, is the beginning of all things, and the perfection of all things, and He is called the Father. The other, or our God, is the depth or the fountain of sciences ; and is called the Son. The other, or Lord, He is the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from them both. Therefore he says, ‘ Hear, O Israel !’ that is, join together this Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and make Him one essence, one substance : for whatsoever is in the one is in the other. He hath been the whole ; He is the whole ; and He will be the wholeⁱ. ”

“ The king Messias,” writes another, “ shall be called by the name of the Holiest, who is blessed, that is, Jehovah.” And, “ Nathan spake of the Messias to David, saying, Jehovah, the Messias who is to come, hath taken away thy sin^k. ”

^b Deut. vi. 4. ⁱ Markanti in Legem, fol. 194, col. 3.

^k Zohar apud Lutkens, Lux in Tenebris ; Hamburgi, 1734, 12mo. pp. 50 and 54.

We conclude these testimonies with the following: “Come and see the mystery of the word Elohim,”—the Hebrew for God. “There are three degrees, and each degree is distinct by itself. Yet they are one, and are joined into one, nor is one divided from another^l. ” “God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, three in Unity, one in Trinity^m. ”

It is needless to point out how fully these passages bear out our preceding arguments; and how fully also they set forth the sonship of the second Person of the holy Trinity. One remark I have, in conclusion, to make: The books, from which I have quoted, are of various dates; some being written before, some after, the commencement of the Christian era; and of some, it is uncertain whether they were written before or after that period: but all of them, directly or indirectly, manifest the common opinion of the nation before

^l Rabbi Simeon B. Jochai: Maii (J. H.) Synopsis Theologiæ Judaicæ, 4to. 1698. p. 31.

^m Rabbi Hackadosch in Kircher OEd. Ægypt. tom. ii. 233, 245.

the time of Christ. The hostility of the Jews, since that time, to the doctrine of the Trinity is notorious : and it is therefore certain, that such passages as I have produced, whatever may be the date of the writings in which they appear, are traditions of a date anterior to the Christian era, and so well known, that it was impossible to suppress them. And the existence of these traditions after the promulgation of the Gospel, shews how deeply and extensively they had taken root before it.

Now consider the severity with which our blessed Saviour animadverted upon the traditions of His countrymen ; not sparing their “ washing of cups and pots, of brazen vessels and of tablesⁿ,” nor even the breadth of “ the borders of their garments^o;” but that on no one occasion does He ever, in the most remote terms, charge them with false doctrine in their traditions of the Trinity. The necessary inference is His approval, and the truth, of that doctrine : and therefore, upon so good autho-

ⁿ Mark vii. 4.

^o Matt. xxiii. 5.

rity, to God the Father, to God the Son,
to God the Holy Spirit, “ three in Unity,
and one in Trinity,” be ascribed equal
honour and glory, throughout all ages.
Amen.

S E R M O N V.

MATT. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

HAVING taken, in the foregoing Lecture, a general review of the evidence of the Old Testament for the doctrine of the Trinity; I shall now proceed with a similar review of the evidence on which this doctrine is received from the New Testament. For this purpose, I shall, on the present occasion, first, request your attention to those passages which bear joint testimony to the

three Divine Persons; and then, consider those proofs of the Godhead of the Son, which arise from the worship received by Him, and likewise from His miracles and attributes.

Under the former head, we shall commence with that passage, which, on account of the repeated and comprehensive proofs of the Trinity contained in it, I have chosen at this time for my text.

“And Jesus came and spake unto them,” that is, the eleven disciples^a, “saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Our Lord Jesus Christ here directed the Apostles to baptize “in,” or, as it ought to be rendered, “unto, the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;” and that this was intended to be the universal and perpetual

^a Matt. xxviii. 16.

form of baptism, is manifest from the command that “ all nations” should be so baptized, and from the gracious promise that He, the great Head of the church, would “ always be with” those who should be employed in the performance of the commands He then delivered, “ even unto the end of the world.”

Now, to baptize, is, in a general sense, to cleanse from defilement, and to set apart for a pure use: as an ordinance of the Christian religion to be received but once, it is symbolically to cleanse from the defilement of sin, and to consecrate by a perpetual obligation to a Christian life. This obligation is the most comprehensive which can be imposed: it involves faith, worship, and obedience; the devotion of body, and soul, and spirit: and it is incurred to the name not only of the Father, but of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It is not worship towards one, obedience towards another, and faith towards another; nor is it all these in a different sense and degree towards each; nor yet is it all these in the same sense towards one, through another,

and in another. Our Saviour does not make any division, distribution, or gradation of our baptismal engagements ; neither does He distinguish one Person, as more especially, or in a higher degree, the object of those engagements, than another : but whatsoever things are undertaken in baptism, whatsoever duties a godly and a Christian life comprehends ; these, undivided and undistributed ; these, in the same sense and degree ; are intended. Such honour, the highest which man can give, belongs only to God ; nor will He permit any creature to be associated with Him in it : and as, on the authority of our blessed Saviour, this honour is to be paid to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, “ we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person to be God and Lord.”

It may, as we are aware, be retorted, that if baptism to the name of a person, impose an obligation to pay him divine honour, baptism to a person must have the same effect ; and that therefore, the baptism of the Israelites unto Moses, spoken

of by St. Paul^b, would prove that Moses was entitled to receive from his countrymen, the honour which he himself taught them was to be given to God alone. But let it be considered, first, that we speak of Christian baptism, and not of any other kind: secondly, that baptism to the name of a person, and baptism to a person, do not signify the same thing, nor have the same effect: thirdly, that though the honour which is paid to the name of a person, may with still greater reason be paid to himself; and though the honour which is paid to a person, may not unreasonably be paid to his name; yet, as it is not said that the Israelites were baptized to the name of Moses, there is no honour mentioned in the case which might have been transmitted through his name to his person; and as it is not contended that baptism to a person is a tribute of divine honour to him, it is needless to disprove that any such honour could have been reflected on the name of Moses: fourthly, that Christian baptism, from which one argument is deduced, is

^b 1 Cor. x. 2.

literal and real; whereas the baptism to Moses was merely figurative: and fifthly, that as it is said that “Moses hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day^c;” where, as in several other places^d, the law, and not the lawgiver, is meant; so the expression of St. Paul may, as indeed it only can, signify baptism, not to the person, but to the law, the doctrine, or the institutions, of Moses. The objection, therefore, is altogether fallacious, and irrelevant: and our conclusion affirmative of the Trinity, remains undisturbed.

The next passage for our consideration, is the benediction of St. Paul to the Corinthians: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all: Amen^e. ”

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is that unmerited favour which He has shewn towards us, in that “though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made

^c Acts xv. 21. ^d Luke xvi. 29. xxiv. 27. Acts xxi. 21. 2 Cor. iii. 15. ^e 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

rich^f：“ the love of God is that compassion for our misery, with which “ the Father sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him^g：“ and the communion of the Holy Ghost is that participation of His gracious influences, to which He admits the disciples of Christ ; that abode or dwelling which He makes with them, giving them an earnest of eternal life here, and preparing them for its enjoyment hereafter. These blessings are the highest in nature and degree of which we are capable ; they are perfectly distinct from each other ; and they proceed respectively from three distinct sources, from the Lord Jesus Christ, from God the Father, and from the Holy Ghost. When, therefore, it is remembered, that to be the author of any good and perfect gift is an incommunicable attribute of the Supreme, we perceive, from the passage before us, a powerful argument for the Godhead of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

We have, further, to remark, that the blessings spoken of by the Apostle are

^f 2 Cor. viii. 9. ^g 1 John iv. 9.

so essentially connected with each other in the economy of the Gospel, that if any one of them were wanting, the others would be fruitless and unavailing: for though “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance^h;” yet “there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus Christⁱ;” and “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His^k.” Let us then reflect, that it is the restoration of the whole world, which the love of God contemplates: a design, which employed the counsels of heaven before all time, and will be the care of Providence until time shall be no more; which engages the anxiety of angels and archangels, and is opposed by the united powers of hell; which embraces the fate of every human being from the creation to the universal judgment, and shall be the theme of the songs of heaven throughout eternity: and shall we believe that He, who “will not give His glory to another,” would

^h 2 Pet. iii. 9.

ⁱ Acts iv. 12.

^k Rom. viii. 9.

make the accomplishment of such a design to be dependent on any creature of His hand; or would make a creature, in conjunction with Himself, the object of our highest gratitude, of the admiration of all good, and of the terror of all evil, spirits? This were altogether abhorrent from the character of God: and we must therefore believe, that they, on whose grace and fellowship the efficacy of the Father's love depends, and who, by their gift of these blessings, become the object of such honour as no creature may receive, are “of one substance, majesty, and glory with Him!”

There is yet another point of view in which we are to look at the passage before us: the words of St. Paul are an indirect invocation of each Person of the Trinity. It is, however, objected; first, that the apostle here expresses only a pious wish; and secondly, that whatever approach to invocation this wish may imply, it is the Father alone who is invoked. But to the first objection we answer, that every pious wish is an indirect prayer: for whatever a

¹ Article I.

man piously desires, and howsoever he may express his desire in words, he lifts up his heart with it, in faith and submission to Him who knows and can satisfy it. To the second objection we answer, that it assumes the very question at issue; but that every reason which will prove that the prayer involved in this wish of St. Paul is addressed to the Father, will also prove that it is addressed to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. The prayer is addressed to the Father, because He is the author of the gift desired from Him; because He could hear and grant the prayer; and because He has taught us to expect that He would so do. Now that our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, are, respectively, the authors of the gifts which are here denominated from them, has been already noticed: that they can hear any petition which may be made to them for those gifts, is a necessary qualification for the office which they sustain of dispensing them: that they can grant such petition, follows from their being the authors of the gifts: and it is certain from many

considerations that we may expect them to do so, and also because their office of dispensation would otherwise be in vain. The same reasons, therefore, on which it can be asserted, that St. Paul indirectly prayed on this occasion to the Father, will shew that his prayer was equally addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. The argument from this is brief. Here is an example of prayer offered under the guidance of inspiration to the Son and the Holy Spirit: the same authority instructs us that this honour is peculiar to God: and we therefore conclude that the Son and the Holy Spirit are God.

These two passages,—our Saviour's commission to the Apostles, and the benediction of St. Paul,—being the only ones from the New Testament, in which the Godhead of each Person of the Trinity is jointly and clearly proved: we now proceed to consider the evidence for the Godhead of the Son, which arises from the worship received by Him, and likewise from His miracles and attributes.

1. Of worship received by our Lord,

various instances are recorded. During His ministry, a leper^m, a ruler of the synagogueⁿ, His disciples^o, a woman of Syrophœnicia^p, the man that was born blind^q, and the mother of Zebedee's children^r; and, after His resurrection, the two Maries^s and His disciples again^t; are said to have worshipped Him. We admit, that the people of the East were accustomed to express civil respect as well as religious homage in this manner: but it must be remembered, that the existence of a custom is by no means a proof of its innocence. To be customary, and to be right, are very distinct, and often very different, things. Now as to the merits of this custom, Scripture is sufficiently decisive. When “Cornelius fell down at St. Peter’s feet, and worshipped him,” the apostle “took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man^u. ” And when the writer of the Apocalypse, on two occasions, “fell down at the feet of the angel

^m Matt. viii. 2.

ⁿ Ibid. ix. 18.

^o Ibid. xiv. 33.

^p Ibid. xv. 25.

^q John ix. 38.

^r Matt. xx. 20.

^s Matt. xxviii. 9.

^t Ibid. ver. 17.

^u Acts x. 25, 26.

to worship him," the heavenly guide restrained him, saying, " See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of the brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God^y."

From these examples it is clear, that, how customary soever it may have been, to express civil respect by that external action which is denominated worship, it was yet improper towards men, improper towards angels, and allowable only towards God. It is not therefore of any importance, as affecting the present question, what opinions the persons offering worship to our blessed Lord entertained of Him, or with what intentions they offered it. Even the external action is a tribute of homage to be paid to none but God; and therefore, were not our Saviour Himself God, it is not to be believed, but that He would have rejected it with at least as marked disapprobation, as Peter and the angel expressed.

But if our attention be directed to the opinions of the worshipper, there are

^y Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 8, 9.

other instances, comprising every thing which can be required. Of these, one of the most illustrious is that of Thomas ; who, at length convinced of the resurrection of Jesus, “ answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God.” That this was an act of the highest religious worship, is a truth, against which the gainsayer has not been able to make any objection requiring our notice : that this worship was addressed to Jesus, is expressly said by the evangelist : and that He accepted and approved of it, is undeniably from His answer, “ Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed^a.”

This view of the apostle’s confession is, indeed, controverted, on the ground, that the resurrection of Christ is not an adequate proof of His Godhead ; and that the alacrity and exuberance of faith imputed to the apostle, on being convinced of the resurrection, are inconsistent with the obstinacy of his previous unbelief. But we learn from our Saviour’s own words, that though “ He was raised up from the dead

^a John xx. 28.

⁴ Ibid. ver. 29.

by the glory of the Father^b,” and by the operation of the Spirit^c; yet His resurrection was accomplished by His own power also. “Destroy this temple,” said the Son of God, “and in three days I will raise it up^d:” “I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again; this commandment have I received of my Father^e.” And if to raise the dead be, as it confessedly is, a work of Divine power; and the possessor of Divine power be, as he can be none other than, a Divine person: then our Lord Jesus Christ, who raised up His own body from the dead, is demonstrated to be the possessor of Divine power, and consequently a Divine person: then His resurrection is an adequate proof of His Godhead.

Moreover; of the expressions last cited, Thomas was, of course, aware; and as we understand his conduct, he would regard the fulfilment of those words, as an incontestable proof of his Master’s Godhead. When, therefore, he was informed that

^b Rom. vi. 4. ^c 1 Pet. iii. 18. ^d John ii. 19.

^e Ibid. x. 18.

Christ “ was risen from the dead, and remembered” what He had said unto them ; the greatness of the conclusion to which the resurrection would immediately lead him, would make it the more difficult to convince him of the truth of that event. But this once proved to his satisfaction, it was with the utmost consistency that he adored Him as his Lord and his God, of whom he had been so slow to believe that He was even alive.

But the Lord Jesus did not receive such honour, only whilst sojourning on earth. Immediately after He had been “ carried up into heaven,” and was no longer visibly present, the eleven disciples “ worshipped Him^{g.}” The first martyr, St. Stephen, “ called upon Him,” with his dying breath, “ saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit^{h.}” St. Paul, in a season of temptation, prayed thrice to Him for relief^{i:} and he continually sought from Him, “ grace, mercy, and peace^{k.}” St. Peter ascribes to Him “ glory both now and for ever^{l.}” Christians, while as

^f John ii. 22. ^g Luke xxiv. 52. ^h Acts vii. 59.

ⁱ 2 Cor. xii. 8. ^j 1 Tim. i. 2. Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3, &c. &c. ^l 2 Pet. iii. 18.

yet that appellation was unknown, are described as those who call upon His name^m.” “ All the angels of God” are commanded to “ worship Himⁿ.” And St. John, in the apocalyptic vision, relates, that he heard “ every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever^o.”

It is unnecessary to express in formal terms the conclusion to which these testimonies lead: and this conclusion is so little impeded by the objections of our opponents, that it would be an unjustifiable waste of these sacred moments to notice them any further, than to describe them as consisting, on the one hand, of a division of religious worship into supreme and secondary, which is diametrically opposed to Scripture: and, on the other, of a definition of religious worship, which would exclude such worship from heaven; of

^m Acts ix. 14.

ⁿ Heb. i. 6.

^o Rev. v. 13.

conjectures, altogether unfounded in some cases, and in others at variance with fact; these conjectures being resorted to, that the different cases might seem to square with their definition: and lastly, on both hands, of an assumption of the whole question.

2. We pass on, then, to the next division of our evidence, namely, that which arises from the miracles of Christ.

We do not attempt to build any argument on the nature or greatness of these miracles: for our Lord Himself said, “He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do^p. ” He appealed to His works, only as the decisive proofs of His veracity and mission. But the manner in which He exercised His miraculous powers requires to be particularly noticed.

When “a leper came and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean; Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean^q:” when He restored the widow’s

^p John xiv. 12.

^q Matt. viii. 2, 3.

son, and the daughter of Jairus, to life, His language was, “ I say unto thee, Arise^r:” He expelled an evil spirit with the words, “ Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him^s:” and when He expostulated with the Jews on their persecution of Him for healing on the sabbath day, He said, “ I have done one work, and ye all marvel ;—if a man on the sabbath day receive circumcision, are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath day^t? ”

We cannot but feel, that the very style of this language is altogether unsuitable even to the highest order of created beings, in the exercise of the highest powers with which they could be entrusted. “ I will ; be thou clean : I say unto thee, arise from the dead : I charge thee, come out of him : I have done one work : I have made a man every whit whole :”—this is a style and authority proper to Him only, who is the supreme Donor of life and health.

^r Luke vii. 14. Mark v. 41.

^s Mark ix. 25.

^t John vii. 21—23.

But considering the expressions more particularly, we perceive that in their literal and apparent meaning, our Lord asserts by direct implication, that He performed these miracles by His own power, on His own authority, and at His own will. And that He did so perform them, is evinced by the following considerations and circumstances.

We have an account of similar language having been employed by Moses, and yet resented by the Most High, as a great, and, in one sense, unpardonable, infringement of His Majesty. “Hear now, ye rebels,” said the prophet to the children of Israel, “must we fetch you water out of this rock? And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them^u. ” The offence of the prophet consisted, as we learn from the inspired authority of the Psalmist, in the words which “he spake unadvisedly with

^u Numb. xx. 10, 12.

his lips^x:” and that it was not in addressing the people as rebels, is evident from the unqualified charges of rebellion, which he brought against them many times afterwards, without any expression of the Divine displeasure. The sin therefore of Moses is to be found only in the question, “ Must we fetch you water out of this rock;” and this could not be any otherwise criminal in so high a degree as it was, than in its containing no acknowledgment of the Divine power, and in setting forth the speaker and his brother, as if it were in obedience to their “ power and holiness,” that the rock was to “ give forth its water^y;” it could be no otherwise criminal, than in a directly implied and unqualified assertion, that the miracle was to be effected by themselves.

That Moses did not mean this, is beyond question: but the words fell “ unadvisedly” from him; and because he gave not the glory to God in the eyes of the people, but appeared to arrogate it to

^x Psalm cvi. 33.

^y Acts iii. 12.

^z Numb. xx. 8.

himself, he received a suitable rebuke and punishment.

And if to use language of this description, even unadvisedly, and without intending what the words literally expressed or easily implied, was criminal in Moses, with whom “the Lord spake face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend^a;” it could not be innocent in the “prophet like unto Moses^b,” if the power which He seemed to claim were not truly and properly His own.

If, moreover, He did perform His miracles by His own power, on His own authority, and at His own will, we know, that as His word is truth, it is also in perfect harmony with His own character, and with the honour of God. But if He did not so perform them, then though His word be still truth, yet His language has an appearance of impiety and of self-exaltation, extremely repugnant to His character, sinless and lowly as it was; indeed, at irreconcilable variance with it; for the bare

^a Exod. xxxiii. 11.

^b Deut. xviii. 15.

appearance of impiety is no light degree of impiety itself.

But the line of defence which He took on one of the occasions referred to, supplies the most decisive evidence of our point. When “the Jews sought to slay Him, because He had” healed “the impotent man on the sabbath day^c;” His obvious and necessary course of defence, if He had been the mere instrument of the Divine power, would have been, either to argue that “it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days^d;” which would have left the present question untouched, and would have been consistent with its determination in either way: or, to represent His own inability to do such things without the special interference of God; that therefore the miracle was God’s doing; and that the breach of the sabbath had been thus sanctioned, and virtually committed, by Him whom they acknowledged to be supreme Lord of the sabbath day. Now instead of this, our blessed Lord broadly and briefly asserts His right, as the coad-

^c John v. 16, 7.

^d Matt. xii. 12.

jutor of the Father in the works of creation and providence, to do as He had done. “ My Father worketh hitherto, and I work^e. ” As if He had said; “ My Father, of whom ye say that He is your God^f, ” “ rested” indeed “ on the seventh day from all His works which He created and made^g; ” but He has continued unceasingly to preserve and govern His works. He rested from His work of creation on the first sabbath; but pursues uninterrupted His work of providence until now. In these, I also work with Him; and though “ I can do nothing of myself, but what I see my Father do; yet what things soever my Father doeth, these also do I likewise^h. ” I have therefore both the unimpeachable example of my Father, and the same right and power with Him, to do as I have done.

It is of no force to object that He acknowledged His power to be derived from the Father: for He Himself is of the Father, as He is the only-begotten Son;

^e John v. 17.

^f Ibid. viii. 54.

^g Gen. ii. 2, 3.

^h John v. 19.

and His power, though derivative, may yet be His own.

Nor is it of more avail to plead against us, that our blessed Lord did all His works in the Father's nameⁱ: for it is said, that by His miracles “ He manifested forth His” own “ glory^k;” and this, as it was not by their excellence^l, so it must have been by the unparalleled and sovereign dignity of His manner, performing them as of Himself, and at least silently permitting them to pass as the proper effect of His own power. He not seldom required unqualified and implicit belief in His power^m, before He would “ stretch forth His hand to healⁿ:” proposing Himself personally to the faith of His suitors, as able to do all that they desired; and never, on any occasion, rebuking them for extravagance or forwardness in their faith, or for the extreme lowliness and abasement with which they entreated His help; but invariably dismissing the humble and believing suppliant with the highest en-

ⁱ John x. 25. ^k Ibid. ii. 11. ^l Page 180.

^m Matt. ix. 27, 28. Mark ix. 23. ⁿ Acts iv. 30.

comiums on his faith^o, and informing him, that for his faith, his prayer was granted, and that “as he had believed, so it was done unto him^p. ”

Again: when He ordained the twelve apostles, it is said, that “He gave them power and authority over all devils, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease^q. ” And when “the seventy” disciples had “returned again with joy,” on the fulfilment of their mission, He conferred upon them still greater powers than they had before received, in these words: “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy.” He is thus represented by the Scripture, which is written that God alone may be exalted, and He represents Himself, to have imparted, as His own, to His apostles and seventy disciples, the power of miracles. And when, before His ascension, He renewed that gift to them, He

^o Matt. viii. 10. and xv. 28. ^p Mark v. 34. and x. 52. Matt. viii. 13. ^q Matt. x. 1. Luke ix. 1.

Luke x. 19.

pronounced that they, in their works, should give the same glory to Him, as He gave in His works to the Father: for as He had said that He did His works in the Father's name; so He declared that in His own name should be performed all those "signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds," which were to follow and confirm His word. "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover^s."

On this department of our evidence, then, which shews that the power, by which our Lord Jesus Christ wrought His miracles, was His own; that He exercised it as His own, and at His own will; that He frequently made implicit and unqualified faith in it, the condition of His goodness; that He imparted a portion of it as His own to His disciples; and that He

^{*} Mark xvi. 17, 18.

required from them in their exercise of it, a glory corresponding with that which He Himself paid in His works to the Father : we conclude, that as His miracles manifested the power of God ; He Himself, the possessor and proprietor of that power, is God.

3. The attributes of our Lord Jesus Christ now claim our attention. We learn, that He is possessed of creative and providential power, of omnipresence, omniscience, immutability, and eternity.

As testifying His creative power, we read : “ All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made^t. ” “ He was in the world, and the world was made by Him^u. ” “ Unto the Son He saith ; Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands^x. ” “ By Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities,

^t John i. 3.

^u Ibid. ver. 10.

^x Heb. i. 10.

or powers ; all things were created by Him and for Him^y."

But two kinds of creation are ascribed to Him ; the one, the production of the universe, to which the texts above quoted refer ; the other, the redemption of His people : the one original, "by way of formation ; the other, secondary, by way of reformation^z :" the one, natural or physical : the other, moral, metaphysical, or spiritual. The former is denied, the latter only is admitted, by the Socinians and Unitarians : and they hold, that all those texts which attribute creation to Christ, are to be explained of the moral creation. Yet even if this were the case, the question would be far from being decided in their favour : for the moral creation is no less real than the natural ; and it may be justly urged, that when the Scriptures call our redemption a creation, they, in effect, call it a work of Divine power ; and speak of Him, in, through, by, and for, whom it was wrought, as the possessor of Divine power, and consequently as a Divine person.

^y Col. i. 16.

^z Pearson on the Creed, Article II. " His only Son."

But as to their plea, that all those texts which attribute creation to our blessed Saviour, are to be explained of the moral creation ; the texts which we have adduced cannot be so explained. For, first ; the moral creation is a restoration to a better state, and is of its nature predictable only of moral agents : of whom neither the angels, nor the world of mankind, but Christians alone, have undergone this creation. The holy angels, having kept their first estate, needed no restoration to it. “ The angels which sinned, and left their own habitation, God hath not spared, but hath cast them down to hell, and hath reserved them in everlasting chains unto darkness and judgment of the great day^a. ” And instead of the world of mankind having been created anew, the Scriptures teach us, that “ the whole world lieth in wickedness^b, ” and that “ the friendship of the world is enmity against God^c. ” But it is written, “ if any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature^d; ” which implies, that if any man

^a Jude 6 ; and 2 Pet. ii. 4.

^b 1 John v. 19.

^c James iv. 4.

^d 2 Cor. v. 17.

be not in Christ Jesus, he is not a new creature: and they who are in Christ Jesus, so far from being denominated the world, are said to be not of the world, but the objects of its hatred^e. Whenever, therefore, the heavens and the earth, or all things in heaven and in earth, in the literal meaning of the terms; whenever the world of mankind, or any class or classes of moral agents, but Christians alone, are said to be created or made, the moral creation cannot be intended.

Secondly; the natural and the moral creation are distinguished from each other, by the former being simply a creation; the latter, a new creation, or a creation from sin to holiness: and it is therefore evidently requisite, that when the moral creation is intended to be understood, and is spoken of as a creation, it should be with its characteristic epithet or difference. Accordingly, in every passage of Scripture, without exception, where the moral creation is clearly intended, it is called a new creation, or a creation unto good works, or

^e John xvii. 14. and xv. 19.

in righteousness and true holiness^f. Hence it follows, that when creation is mentioned without the distinguishing epithet or qualification of the moral creation; whenever a thing or person is simply said to be created or made; the natural, and not the moral creation, is intended.

Thirdly, there are two of the texts quoted, which, if explained of the moral creation, would be self-contradictory. For the second clause of the passage, “He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not,” would mean, that the world was created anew by Him: but the new creation is a renewal in knowledge after the image of Him who created us^g, the knowledge of “the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent^h:” and thus the Socinian interpretation would make St. John assert, that the world was renewed in knowledge by Jesus Christ, and yet knew him not, that is to say, was not renewed in knowledge; which is an express self-contradic-

^f 2 Cor. v. 17. Gal. vi. 15. Eph. ii. 10. and iv. 24.
^g Col. iii. 10. ^h John xvii. 3.

tion. And in expounding of the moral creation the text, “ by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by Him and for Him ;” they are forced to say, that things in heaven are the Jews, and things in earth the Gentiles ; which is directly opposed to the words “ visible and invisible ” immediately following. Not to say, that for interpreting “ things in heaven and earth ” to mean Jews and Gentiles, there is not the slightest warrant in Scripture ; and that if “ things in heaven and in earth ” do mean Jews and Gentiles ; “ all things in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers,” must mean, that all Jews and Gentiles without exception, from the greatest to the least, were created anew by Christ ; which is contradictory to plain and melancholy fact.

Fourthly ; our opponents themselves acknowledge, that the passage, “ Thou, Lord,

in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands," is to be understood of the natural creation : and though they endeavour to evade the difficulty to which this reduces them, by asserting that the words are an address to the Father ; yet St. Paul, who quotes this with another equally striking passage from the Psalms, tells us expressly, that they were both spoken " to" or " of the Sonⁱ."

And, fifthly, our opponents themselves practically confute their plea, by their dissatisfaction with their own interpretation of these texts ; and by the glaring absurdities to which their reckless application of their theory has therein led them ; and to which, nevertheless, they adhere, rather than submit to the acknowledgment of the truth.

From these reasons it is abundantly manifest, that the Socinian objection cannot be maintained ; and that the texts which we have considered, do attribute the creation of the universe to Christ.

ⁱ Heb. i. 8.

I have been the more particular on this subject, because, having once satisfactorily shewn that our blessed Lord possesses creative power, His attribute of providential power, which now comes before us, will be more easily proved. He who created the world, must be confessed to be desirous and able to preserve the work of His own hands. But the Scripture gives a particular proof of this, by instructing us, that “as by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible;” so “by Him all things consist, and by the word of His power they are upheld^k. ”

Hence, again, we infer, that He is omnipresent: for He upholds all things, and “where He acts, He is!” For a particular proof, however, of this attribute, we appeal to those gracious promises: “where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them^m:” “go ye and teach all nations:—and lo, I am with you alway,

^k Col. i. 16, 17. Heb. i. 3. ^l Paley; Nat. Theol. chap. 24. ^m Matt. xviii. 20.

even unto the end of the worldⁿ;" together with the blessed assurance, that "the heavens having received the Son of God until the times of the restitution of all things^o," He there "sitteth on the right hand of God^p, making intercession for all that come unto God by Him^q," and "expecting until His enemies be made His footstool^r." He, therefore, who is in the midst of His disciples in every place where two or three are assembled in His name, who is always with His ministers in all nations; who is also in heaven at the right hand of God; and thus is in many thousands of places on earth, and yet in heaven at the same time, making intercession for those whose prayers He is hearing on earth; must be believed to be omnipresent: for all these things, though they do not strictly constitute omnipresence, are yet incompatible with the notion of any, but of one possessed of this attribute.

It can hardly be requisite to notice the Socinian interpretation of one of the places

ⁿ Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.
iii. 1. ^o Heb. vii. 25.

^o Acts iii. 21.
^r Ibid. i. 13.

^p Col.

just quoted : “ I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world : ” for though it may be rendered “ unto the end of the age ” or “ dispensation ; ” the assumption that our Lord meant the Jewish or Mosaic dispensation, is evidently opposed to the facts of the case, and would altogether nullify His promise. The Mosaic dispensation, as such, necessarily expired, when the Christian dispensation began ; when the one sacrifice once for all was offered, and the vail of the temple was rent in twain ; and the eternal High Priest, the Son of God, was entering into the Holiest of all, to make atonement for us with His own blood.

Of His knowledge, we reason that He, who made and upholds all things, must know all things, both in themselves, and in their operations and designs : “ known unto Him ” must be “ all His works from the beginning^s. ” And for special proof that He possessed this knowledge, we refer to the appeal of St. Peter, “ Lord, thou knowest all things^t ; ” together with the

^s Acts xv. 18.

^t John xxi. 17.

confession of the apostles, “ now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee^u. ” Both these acknowledgments were received by Him, the former with tacit, the latter with expressed, approbation : and that they are to be taken in an unrestricted sense, as asserting His omniscience, is beyond all just doubt ; for though the word in the original for “ all things,” is frequently to be understood as comprising those things only which are referred to or implied in the context ; there is not any thing whatever referred to or implied in the context of these places, to put any limit to its meaning.

It is, we are aware, objected, that Christians also are said to know all things. But this knowledge is at the same time attributed to the unction or teaching of the Holy One, which comprises not all things absolutely, but all those things only which are necessary to salvation. “ Ye have an unction from the Holy One,” is the passage, “ and know all things^x. ” There

^u John xvi. 30.

^x 1 John ii. 20.

is, therefore, a limit here, which is not found in the other cases: and consequently there is no parallel between them.

Further proof of our Lord's omniscience is found in various passages, in which He is shewn to possess the knowledge of things beyond the reach of His bodily senses; of future events; of the thoughts and desires of men; and of the Father.

When Peter was asked, “Doth not your Master pay tribute?” Jesus “prevented” or anticipated the demand, and sent him to “cast an hook” into the sea; telling him, that in the mouth of the fish that first came up, he should find a piece of money sufficient to pay the tribute for both himself and his Master^y. And when again, after one of His journeys to Capernaum, our Lord asked His disciples, “What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?” and they were silent from shame or fear,—“for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest:”—He shewed His perfect knowledge of what had thus passed out of

the reach of His hearing, by the pointed reproof: “ If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all^z. ”

Similar instances are afforded by His minute instructions to the disciples, when He sent them for the ass on which He was to ride into Jerusalem^a; and when, a few days afterwards, He commissioned them to make ready the passover^b: as also by His cognizance of the proceedings of Judas, when the traitor was secretly plotting His ruin^c.

If it be said, that this supernatural acquaintance with things locally distant, was merely communicated to Him by revelation: there is another instance which is decisive of the point; the answer, namely, of our Lord to Nathanael: “ Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee^d. ” He does not say, that He knew what Nathanael was doing; but, that, though beyond the reach

^z Mark ix. 33—35. ^a Matt. xxi. 2, 3. and Mark xi. 2. ^b Luke xxii. 10—13. ^c John xiii. 27.

^d John ii. 48.

of His bodily sight, He saw him : a word which, in the case, expresses, as plainly and decidedly as words can express, intuitive knowledge.

It were superfluous to adduce any passages in testimony of His knowledge of future events : but there is a very striking peculiarity in His manner of delivering His various prophecies, which has an important bearing on our argument. We perceive in it no symptom of secondary or revealed knowledge. He does not, like the prophets, say, “The word of the Lord came unto me ;” or, “Thus saith the Lord ;” or, “A vision appeared unto me ;” but, “I tell you ;” “Behold, I have foretold you ;” “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” He delivers His predictions, apparently, from the fulness and authority of original and most perfect knowledge : and if apparently, it was in His case, really ; for it was not in Him to assume the appearance of any thing which He did not really possess.

In many circumstances of His earthly course, He is likewise manifested as “a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the

heart^e." "He needed not," indeed, we are informed, "that any should testify" to Him "of men; for He knew what was in man^f;" and this, not, as has been vainly pretended, by any of those sources which are open to human investigation; but by "perceiving in His spirit," and "knowing in Himself," the reasonings of men's hearts^g; or, as He Himself describes it, in terms which denote that His knowledge of the heart is both absolute and intuitive; when He says, "I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts^h."

And again, that our Lord Jesus Christ has a perfect knowledge of the Father, is evidenced by His own declaration: "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Fatherⁱ;" for, as the Father's knowledge of the Son is undeniably perfect in every respect, and is here given as the measure and standard of the Son's knowledge of the Father; the latter must be

^e Heb. iv. 13. Matt. xii. 25. Luke vii. 39, 40. and ix. 47. John iii. 48. xiii. 11. and xvi. 19. ^f John ii. 25.

^g Mark ii. 8. John vi. 61, 64. ^h Rev. ii. 23. ⁱ John x. 15.

equally perfect with the former. No limit is assignable to the one: neither, therefore, can any limit be assigned to the other. In like manner, also, He said at another time, “No one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any one the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him^k.” We, indeed, may attain to the knowledge of the Father: but there is a marked distinction between this knowledge as possessed by us, and as belonging to the Son: our knowledge being derived by revelation from Him; His knowledge of the Father being original and intuitive, and such, consequently, as cannot be ascribed to any created intelligence.

Since, then, the Scripture teaches us, that all things in general are known to our most gracious Redeemer: since, in particular, He had an intuitive perception of things locally distant; possessed original and perfect knowledge of the future; and knew in Himself the thoughts and intents of the human heart: and since He has also

^k Matt. xi. 27.

a perfect knowledge of the Father and Maker of all: we conclude, that every thing created and uncreated is known to Him; and that He has therefore absolute and unlimited omniscience. His omniscience, indeed, would necessarily follow from His knowledge of the Father; for nothing can be unknown to Him, who comprehends the Infinite, and has “searched out the Almighty unto perfection.” His knowledge also of the Father, and His discernment of the human heart, are, in themselves, conclusive proofs of His Godhead: for none can perfectly know the Father, but one who is equal to Him in nature; and it is God “only” that “knoweth the hearts of the children of men!”

But our adversaries contend, that this doctrine of Christ’s omniscience is contradicted by Himself; where, speaking of the day of judgment, He says, “Of that day and that hour knoweth no one, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father^m.ⁿ” Some, indeed, conceive, that the objection is satisfactorily

^l 2 Chron. vi. 30.

^m Mark xiii. 32.

answered, by alleging that our Saviour here employed a Hebrew idiom in His use of the original word for “ knoweth;” and that instead of translating it, “ no one knoweth,” we should translate it, “ no one maketh to know,” that is, no one revealeth or shall make known, “ that day and hour,—but the Father.” This interpretation is supported by other examples of the same idiom in the New Testament; as, “ lead us not into temptation,” for “ suffer us not to be led;” and, “ I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” for “ I determined not to make known” or “ to preach.” It also affords a brief and easy solution of a difficulty, on which our opponents lay great stress; but which they, of all others, from their peculiar fondness for Hebrew idioms, cannot, if they regard consistency, object to have resolved in this manner.

I prefer, however, a different solution: both because it is at least as satisfactory,

ⁿ Macknight in loc. and Prelim. Dissert. iv. No. 7.

^o Matt. vi. 13.

^p 1 Cor. ii. 2.

less open to objection, and much more safe. I prefer, at once and most freely, to admit, that, in the usual sense of the word, our Lord Jesus Christ did not know the day appointed for the last judgment: and if we had not been informed of His ignorance in this particular, I would still admit, that He may,—nay more, that He must,—have been ignorant of many other things. For little will serve to shew that there is not any contradiction in this to His being possessed of omniscience.

“ What then?”—the gainsayer will perhaps exclaim;—“ do you mean to contend that ignorance and omniscience are not directly opposed to each other?” We admit that, abstractedly, they are opposed: but this is not the question. It is, whether they are opposed to each other in the person of Christ; whether they may not coexist in Him: which is a perfectly distinct question, and points out, when thus stated, the true answer to the objection. For though ignorance and omniscience are directly opposed to each other; yet we are conscious that the most direct opposites

may be true of the selfsame individual. The same man is both mortal and immortal; has a material and an immaterial nature, with their distinct and opposite properties.

But when opposites are true, as in these instances, of the same individual at the same time; it is evident that they are true only in different respects: and when we say of man, that he is mortal and immortal; it is immediately perceived, that we do not mean to say he is so in the same respect; but mortal, in respect of his body; immortal, in respect of his soul. And therefore, if there is one respect, in which our Lord Jesus Christ could be more or less ignorant; and another, in which He could be omniscient; the difficulty altogether vanishes.

Now we know, that the Redeemer of men was a man like unto us in all things, yet without sin. As a man, therefore, He had nothing but what He received: as man, He was born ignorant: as man, He was an infant in intellectual, as well as bodily, powers: as man, He “ increased

in wisdom," as well as "in stature^p:" as man, He could not be omniscient. But since omniscience is peculiar to God; He could not be omniscient in any other respect, than as being God. In respect only of His manhood, or of a created nature, can ignorance be attributed to Him: in respect only of a supremely Divine nature, can He be represented as omniscient.

If, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, can be both God and man; He can be both omniscient and more or less ignorant, with as great truth as the same man is both mortal and immortal. For in this union of the Divine and human natures in the person of Christ, their properties are much less to be confounded with each other, than the properties of matter and spirit are confounded in their personal union in the same man. There is no conversion of spirit into matter, or of matter into spirit, in the human person: and so, neither can there be any "conversion of the Godhead into flesh," or of the

^p Luke ii. 52.

manhood into God ; any commixture, so to speak, in which the two natures should lose their characteristic properties, and form some third intermediate nature between God and man ; any diminution or obliteration of the one nature by the other. The intellect, therefore, of the higher nature must necessarily be conceived to be, and for ever to remain, altogether distinct from the intellect of the lower nature : the one, infinite ; the other, finite : the one, omniscient ; the other, not omniscient.

Nor is there any inconsistency in this, more than there is between our blessed Lord's own observation, “ Ye have the poor with you always, but me ye have not always^q;” and His promise, “ Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world^r:” than there is to be found in the declaration, “ No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven^s:” or than there is between His being “ the life^t,” and yet dying ; between

^q Mark xiv. 7. ^r Matt. xxviii. 20. ^s John ii. 13.

^t John xi. 25.

His dying, and yet raising Himself from the dead.

Hence it is undeniable, that the passage before us, which affirms our Saviour's ignorance of the day of judgment, does not present any contradiction to His perfect omniscience, unless on previous proof that He cannot be both God and man. This proof, however, our opponents neither have given, nor are able to give: for neither we nor they can know any thing of the union of the Divine and human natures, as a bare question of possibility; though in the narrow limits even of our present knowledge, there is at least one analogy, to which we have referred,—the personal union of two such opposite elements as matter and spirit in the same man,—which might predispose us to the affirmative of that question.

But the impugners of our Saviour's Godhead are contented to assume, that the Divine and human natures cannot be united in the same person; that our blessed Saviour cannot be both God and man: and this assumption is the sole foundation

not only of their present, but of a very large number also of their other objections. The assumption originates in this manner :—that man cannot be God, is a proposition undeniably true, in the sense, that a mere man cannot be God; that the human nature is not, and cannot become, divine : but by no means to be confidently affirmed, and still less to be denied, by us, on its intrinsic merits, in the sense that a man, the man Christ Jesus, cannot be also God; that the human nature cannot be united with the Divine ; that the Supreme Being is altogether unable to take our nature into personal union with Himself. The two senses of the proposition are perfectly distinct from each other. Whereas our opponents, whether consciously or unconsciously, treat them as identical ; and perpetually substitute the latter for the former : a proceeding which places them in this dilemma ; that if they do it consciously, their integrity ; if unconsciously, their capacity ; as reasoners and as teachers of truth ; is deeply implicated.

We, on the other hand, do not presume

to know or to determine any thing of the union of the two natures in the person of Christ, as an independent question of possibility. We inquire what the Scriptures say of the fact; assured that if they teach us the fact, the possibility must needs follow.

But though our opponents cannot prove that there is a contradiction in the case; it is incumbent on us, as contending not for victory, but for truth, the whole truth of the Inspired Word, to prove that there is not.

If, then, the knowledge attributed to our blessed Saviour, on the one hand, and the ignorance on the other, were attributed to Him in the same respect; there would be a contradiction in saying that His knowledge amounted to omniscience, and yet that He knew not the day of His own coming: and we should therefore be obliged to deduct that day from the apparent sum of His knowledge, and to conclude, first, that He knew all things, this excepted; and next, that, a limit being once found to His knowledge, it is infinitely short of

omniscience. But if the knowledge attributed to Him on the one hand, and the ignorance on the other, are attributed to Him in different respects; there cannot be any contradiction between them.

Now that His ignorance was in respect of His human nature, will not be questioned:—He, indeed, teaches us that it was; for He calls Himself throughout the context, only and repeatedly, by the title of “the Son of man.”—And it was in respect of His human nature only: for if it be granted that He had any other nature; it must be either a created nature superior to man, or a Divine nature: and to this nature, whatever it be, must be attributed the knowledge, which we have shewn that He possesses, generally of all things, and, in particular, of things locally distant, of the future, of the human heart, and of the Father; because such knowledge is plainly above the capacity of man. But it is as plainly above the capacity of a created mind: for, to instance in one branch of it alone, no created mind can be conceived

^u Mark xiii. 26. Matt. xxiv. 24, 27, 30, 37, 39, 44.

to possess as He does, the intuitive and infallible comprehension of the Eternal. He therefore that possesses such knowledge, must have an uncreated, that is to say, a Divine nature; and of this, ignorance cannot in any degree be affirmed. It follows that our Saviour's ignorance of the day of judgment was in respect only of His human nature: but we have seen, that the knowledge attributed to Him, as above specified, could not be in that respect: and therefore there is not any contradiction whatever in the case.

It may be urged, however, that a difficulty yet remains, of which we have not taken any notice. It is said, “neither the Son, but the Father;” and in the corresponding place of St. Matthew, “of that day and hour knoweth no one, no, not the angels in heaven, but the Father only,” or “my Father only*;” which would appear to restrict the knowledge of that day to the Father, exclusive of the Son in every respect. But this again is to take for granted the thing which is to be proved.

* Matt. xxiv. 36.

The word “ Father” is not unfrequently used in that larger, if I may so speak, or rather less definite, sense, which intends simply the Divine Being or God, and not the Father only and personally, as distinguished from the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus we read in our Lord’s own words: “ the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father :—the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him^y. ” And the same authority so explains His use of the word, when He adds in the next verse: “ God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” The diligent reader of the Scriptures will easily find other instances: but these are sufficient to shew that the word may be so understood. That it must be so understood here,—in a comprehensive not an exclusive sense,—will appear from the following considerations. First, that as the Holy

¹ John iv. 21, 23, 24.

Spirit, who “searcheth all things, even the deep things of God^a,” cannot be excluded: so neither can the Son, who knoweth the Father and His will, as the Father knoweth the Son and His will. Secondly: that our blessed Lord, speaking in some other places of the Father personally, says, “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.—Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but my Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me^a. ” And thirdly: that the same mode of interpretation which, from the passage before us, would restrict the knowledge of the day of judgment to the Father personally, and exclusively of the Son; would also, where it is said that “the Word of God had a name written that no man,” or, as it ought to be translated, “no one, knew, but He Himself^b,” take away the knowledge of this name from the Father; and thus prove that He is not omniscient: and where

^a 1 Cor. ii. 10. ^a John xiv. 9—11. ^b Rev. xix. 12, 13.

again it is said, “ Paul an apostle not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ^c;” it would oblige us to deny the humanity of our Saviour.

It is on the whole then, I would hope, abundantly manifest, not only that the passage before us cannot be proved to be, but also that it is not, contradictory to the omniscience of our Lord: and nothing, therefore, remains to take away from the fulness of our previous conclusion, that every thing created and uncreated is known to the Son of God, and that He has absolute and unlimited omniscience.

From this full consideration of the divine knowledge of Christ, we may now pass on to our evidence of His two remaining attributes, immutability and eternity. And we shall join these together; for “ in sound reasoning, one implies the other; and to prove either, is at the same time proving both^d. ” Nothing subject to change is eternal; nothing limited by time is immutable.

^c Gal. i. 1. See also verses 11 and 12.

^d Waterland’s 7th Sermon at Lady Moyer’s Lecture.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews applies to our blessed Saviour the following passage of the Psalms, which I have before adduced under another head, and the language of which cannot require any explanation. “Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands: they shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” And again in similar phrase, he reminds the disciples of the Gospel, that “Jesus Christ,—the end of their conversation,”—is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever^f:” “the same,”—unchangeable,—in time past, present, and to come.

Being thus exalted above all the changes of time, He is, by consequence, eternal. And the Lord Jesus Himself, in several places of the book of Revelations, affirms His eternity, in words which are employed

^e Heb. i. 10—12.

Ibid. xiii. 7, 8.

in the same book and in the ancient Scriptures also^g, to denote the eternity of God. “ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last^h. ”

Now therefore unto Him, the eternal and immutable, the all-wise and omnipresent, the Creator and Upholder of the universe ; whose works, when sojourning on earth, were wrought with all demonstration of His inherent power ; whom the saints in heaven and in earth, whom apostles and angels, worship and magnify : to Him with the Father and the Holy Ghost, into whose one name we are baptized, and from whom alone we can receive the blessings of salvation ; be ascribed equal and eternal praise.

^g Rev. i. 8. Isa. lxi. 4; lxiv. 6; lxviii. 12.

^h Rev. i. 11; xxi. 6; xxii. 13.

S E R M O N VI.

HEB. i. 8.

*But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is
for ever and ever.*

ONE department of the evidence, which proves our Saviour's Godhead, yet remains for consideration; namely, the titles ascribed to Him in the New Testament. On this therefore we now enter.

Some of His titles are these: “the power and the wisdom of God^a: the Holy One and the Just^b: the light of the Gentiles; the glory of Israel^c, of whom all the prophets bare witness^d; the light of the world^e: the bread of life; the living bread which came down from heaven^f: the Prince

^a 1 Cor. i. 24. ^b Acts iii. 14. ^c Luke ii. 32.
Acts xiii. 47. ^d Acts x. 43. John i. 45. ^e John
viii. 12. ^f John vi. 35, 51.

of life^s; the way, the truth, the resurrection, and the life^h: the Captain of our salvationⁱ, whom we are to follow with unhesitating confidence, with the most firm devotion, through evil report and good report, through distresses, afflictions, persecutions, and torments, not fearing even death in its most terrific forms: the head over all things to the Church^k: the donor of forgiveness and repentance^l, of grace and faith, of consolation, mercy, and peace^m: the performer of our petitionsⁿ: the author and finisher of our faith^o: the end of our conversation^p: the strength of the weak^q; the restorer of the weary^r; the help of the afflicted^s; the refuge of the penitent^t: the object of our faith^u and hope^x, our love^y and praise^z; in whom we are to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full

^s Acts iii. 15. ^h John xiv. 6, and xi. 25. ⁱ Heb. ii. 10. ^k Eph. i. 22. ^l Acts v. 31. ^m 1 Tim. i. 2. Jude 21. Luke xvii. 5. ⁿ John xiv. 13, 14. Ps. xx. 5. Prayer Book Version. ^o Heb. xii. 2. ^p Heb. xiii. 17. ^q Phil. iv. 13. ^r Matt. xi. 28. ^s Luke iv. 19. ^t John vi. 37. ^u John xiv. 1. ^x 1 Tim. i. 1. ^y 1 Cor. xvi. 22. John xiv. 21, 23. Eph. vi. 24. Matt. x. 37. John viii. 42. ^z Rev. i. 5, 6. and v. 12.

of glory^a. He is all and in all^b: the Prince of the kings of the earth^c: the Lord from heaven^d: the Lord of glory^e: the Lord of the dead and of the living^f: the Lord of all^g, and over all^h: the Head of all principality and powerⁱ: the King of kings and Lord of lords^k, of whose kingdom there shall be no end^l; far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come^m: whose name is to be invokedⁿ and loved^o, magnified^p and glorified^q: whom all men are to honour even as they honour the Father^r: and at whose name every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father^s.

To the reader of the Scriptures, who with meekness and singleness of heart

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| ^a 1 Pet. i. 8. | ^b Col. iii. 11. | ^c Rev. i. 5. |
| ^d 1 Cor. xv. 47. | ^e 1 Cor. ii. 8. | Rom. xiv. 9. |
| ^g Acts x. 36. | ^h Rom. x. 12. | ⁱ Col. ii. 10. |
| ^k Rev. xix. 16. | ^l Luke i. 33. | ^m Eph. i. 21. |
| ^u Acts ii. 21. xxii. 16. Rom. x. 13. | | [•] Heb. vi. 10. |
| ^p Acts xix. 17. | ^q 2 Thess. i. 12. | ^r John v. 23. |
| ^s Phil. ii. 10, 11. | | |

“ receives the ingrafted word^t;” who is duly impressed with a sense of the pre-eminent majesty of God, and the immeasurable inferiority of all creatures to Him that made them ; these titles,—these, the obscurer parts of the Saviour’s majesty^u, will infallibly proclaim Him to be “ the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin^x. ”

And let those who object to this conclusion take each title by itself : let them make the most ample allowance they can demand for Eastern hyperbole ; and let them give any plausible interpretation to each, sufficient to satisfy any plain, unlettered man :—then let them join all together ; and they will find an honour so high and universal, a splendour so glorious, a majesty so awful, yet abiding on the throne of Jesus, as is meet only for Him who is the most Highest over all.

The Almighty God has taught, that Him-

^t James i. 21. ^u Exod. xxxiii. 23. ^x Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

self only we shall serve^y; Him only trust^z; Him only love with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength^a; Him only worship^b; from Him only expect the fulfilment of our petitions^c; Him only acknowledge to be the Lord^d. He has told us, that His name is Jealous; that He bears not this name in vain, for He is a jealous God^e; that He is jealous of His name and glory^f; and that under the Gospel dispensation especially, He alone will be exalted^g.

And greater service none can pay even to the Father, than that in which we are bound to Him, who has bought us with the price of His own most precious blood^h: a service embracing every thought, and word, and workⁱ; that we may be “ holy and unblameable and unreproveable in His sight^k.” Greater trust can the Father receive of none, than that which we repose

^y Matt. iv. 10. ^z Jer. xvii. 5, 7. ^a Luke x. 27.

^b Exod. xx. 3, 5. ^c Isa. xlv. 20, 21. ^d Isa. xlv. 6.

^e Exod. xxxiv. 14. ^f Ezek. xxxix. 25. Isa. xlvi. 8.

^g Isa. ii. 11, 17. ^h Col. iii. 24. 1 Cor. vi. 22. Eph. vi. 6. 1 Cor. vi. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 1. 1 Pet. i. 19. Tit. ii. 14.

ⁱ 2 Cor. x. 5. Col. ii. 17. ^k Col. i. 22.

in Christ unto the great day. “Greater love hath no man than this ; to forsake all that he hath ; to hate father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also¹, as we are required to do, for the sake of Christ. Greater benefits can none desire or receive, than the pardon and grace, the blessedness of heaven and eternal life, which we look for from the riches of our Saviour’s love. Greater honour the Father Himself cannot receive, than that which every tongue shall give, and “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them,” shall ascribe to the Lord Jesus, when they shall say, “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever^m. ”

When, therefore, all this service, this trust, this love and honour, rendered to the Lord Jesus together with the Father, is so far from provoking the Divine jealousy, that it is the will, and shall terminate

¹ John xv. 13. Luke xxiv. 26.

^m Rev. v. 13.

in the glory, of God the Father; what shall we conclude, but that the Son is so united in nature with the Father, that in giving unto Him this glory, God giveth it not to another than Himself? that the Son is one God with the Father, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal? The case, in short, is this: God will not give His glory to another; but He does give His glory to Christ; therefore Christ is not another than God; that is to say, He is God Himself.

Again: “He is the Lord, the righteous Judgeⁿ,” who, at “the end of the world^o, shall come in His own glory and in His Father’s^p, with His mighty angels^q, and shall sit in the throne of His glory^r. And before Him shall be gathered all nations^s, to be judged every man according to their works^t.” Then shall “every knee bow” before Him, “and every tongue confess^u” His power. And He “shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make

ⁿ 2 Tim. iv. 8. ^o Matt. xiii. 39. ^p Luke ix. 26.

^q 2 Thess. i. 7. ^r Matt. xix. 28. ^s Matt. xxv. 32.

^t Rev. xx. 13. ^u Phil. ii. 10, 11.

manifest the counsels of the hearts.*” “ And He shall separate” the righteous from the wicked, “ as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. Then shall the King say unto” the righteous, “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” But unto the wicked, “ He shall say, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.”

Let us weigh well the several particulars here brought together. The Lord Jesus “ shall come in His own glory, and in His Father’s;” enjoying an honour expressly reserved for God alone. His attendants are said to be, not simply the angels, or the mighty angels, but, “ His own mighty angels.” He shall sit in the throne of His glory; and there, in person, shall receive from the whole human race, who are to be never before, and shall be never thereafter, assembled together, the greatest and the most awful tribute of honour which can be

* 1 Cor. iv. 5.

? Matt. xxv. 32, 34, 41, 46.

received from men; an honour therefore which we cannot conceive would be permitted to any creature of God. “ He shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts.” He shall exercise in its highest perfection, its utmost extent, and its most awful application, the power of searching the hearts; an attribute, which, being Divine, no created intellect can acquire by any degree of improvement, and no intellect, less than Divine, can thus wholly receive, or thus fully and perfectly possess and use. He shall pronounce judgment as “ the King,” the possessor of supreme power, from whom there shall be no petition or appeal, and whose acts shall require no confirmation. He will exhibit mercy and justice in the highest possible degree. His sentence will be unimpeachably just and holy: it will be executed with irresistible and eternal power: and its consequences no duration shall limit, no vicissitude reverse.

May we so confess and obey Him now, that we may be acknowledged and rewarded of Him in that day!

He is also “the good Shepherd^z,” the great^a, the chief^b, the one^c Shepherd: He is our only Lord and Master^d: our Lord and Saviour^e, the Saviour of the world^f. But it is the Lord, Jehovah, who is our Shepherd^g: God is the Lord, there is none else^h, and we can have no Master, but oneⁱ: it is the Lord, Jehovah, who is our Saviour, and there is no Saviour besides Him^k. By these titles, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ is seen to be the Lord Jehovah.

Another title very frequently applied to Him, is, the Son of God. All men^l, indeed, and especially all good men^m, are called sons of God: and in this sense He may be called a son of God, or, as he excels them all, The Son of God. He is also thus denominated on account of His miraculous human birth, as it was expressed by the Angel to the Virgin Mary: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee:

^z John x. 14. ^a Heb. xiii. 20. ^b 1 Pet. v. 4.

^c John x. 16. ^d Matt. xxiii. 8. Eph. iv. 4—6.
John xiii. 13. ^e 2 Pet. iii. 18. ^f 1 John iv. 14.

^g Ps. xxiii. 1. ^h Isa. xlvi. 6. ⁱ Matt. iv. 24.

^k Isa. xliii. 11. ^l Mal. ii. 10. Acts xvii. 29. ^m Gen. vi. 4. John i. 12. Rom. viii. 14. 1 John iii. 1.

therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of Godⁿ.” A further reason for ascribing this title to Him, is His glorious resurrection from the dead, when the Father is said to have addressed to Him this most honourable acknowledgment, “ Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee^o.” He is likewise supposed to be called the Son of God, on account of His divine commission or Messiahship: because the Messiah, or the Christ, is frequently spoken of with this title; and because He thus argued with the Jews: “ Is it not written in your law, I said that ye are gods. If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God^p? ” And, lastly, He is supposed to have received this title on His exaltation to His mediatorial kingdom, and His inheritance in heaven^q.

ⁿ Luke i. 35. ^o Acts xiii. 33. ^p John x. 34—36.

^q Heb. i. 3, 4, 5. Pearson on the Creed, Art. “ His only Son.”

But He is the Son of God in a much higher sense than these: He is the only begotten of the Father. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth^r. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him^s. ”

We are, indeed, informed by writers of the self-styled Unitarian body, that the word here translated “only begotten,” means no more than “beloved, dearly beloved^t, peculiarly beloved, or beloved as an only Son^u;” but they have no better authority for this, than a Hebrew idiom invented for the purpose by themselves, which they allege is followed in the Greek of these, and the other places, where the word occurs in the New Testament; and a loose translation of the corresponding Hebrew word, in the ancient Greek version of the Old Testament. It is very true that

^r John i. 14. [•] 1bid. ver. 18. ^t Belsham’s Calm Inquiry, p. 259. ^u Carpenter’s Comparative View, p. 33.

the word expresses the reason, why the person to whom it is applied, should be peculiarly beloved; for an only son is more loved than one of several sons; and his being an only son is the reason of his being beloved as such: but we are not to confound the proper meaning of a word with an inference from the passage where it occurs, nor put the consequence for its reason, the effect for its cause. Neither the Greek nor the Hebrew word can ever, in any place where it occurs, be made, even with the help of the pretended Hebrew idiom, to signify a son beloved, peculiarly beloved, or beloved as an only son, where it does not strictly and primarily mean, an only, and that, not an adopted or figurative, but, a true, son. The expression “only begotten Son,” therefore, accurately conveys the meaning of the original.

Now, on inquiring in what respect our Lord Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God; it is to be noticed, that this title is exclusive, and shuts out all others from the sonship thus attributed to Him. This

Sonship belongs to Him alone. It has no reference therefore to His humanity; for we all share it with Him: nor to His piety; for all pious persons are said to be begotten of God^x. It has no reference to His miraculous human birth: for the births of Isaac and John were also miraculous, though, as we would apprehend, not in so high a degree as His; and the production of Adam, who on account of his creation is called the son of God^y, was yet, as we again would apprehend, more miraculous than His. It has no reference to His Messiahship, since the word of God came to others as well as to Him; and His being the Messiah was the consequence, and not the reason, of His being the Son of God; as He Himself most clearly intimates in the parable: “Having yet therefore one son, his dearly beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son^z:” and as is also necessarily implied in the following out of many other passages: “The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour

^x 1 John v. 18.

^y Luke iii. 38.

^z Mark xii. 6.

of the world^a,” that is, sent the Son to be the Messiah or the Christ. Nor is He the only begotten Son in respect of His resurrection or exaltation; for He called Himself by this title at the very beginning of His ministry, saying to Nicodemus: “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life^b. ” He is indeed the first-born or first-begotten from the dead: but “many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves, after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many^c;” so that He is not the only begotten from the dead. And His exaltation to His kingdom and inheritance was the privilege, and not the foundation, of His Sonship. Nor is it in respect of any supposed angelic nature or capacity, that He is called by this title; for though the angels are called the sons of God^d, He is the only Son, the only begotten of the Father.

^a 1 John iv. 14. ^b John iii. 16. ^c Matt. xxvii. 52, 53. ^d Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7.

Since, therefore, it is not in any human respect, personal or official, nor in respect of any supposed angelic nature, that He is the only begotten Son ; we might at once conclude, that it is in respect of a truly Divine nature, for no other respect remains. But in addition to this proof that He is not, in any other respect, we shall give positive proof that He is, in this respect, the only begotten of the Father.

Now if it shall appear, that He called Himself the Son of God in such a sense as to be equal with God, and one with God, and to be God ; or to have justly incurred the charge of blasphemy, if He were not truly God ; the desired proof will have been obtained.

When our blessed Lord said to the Jews, “ My Father worketh hitherto, and I work ;” we are told, that “ they sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the sabbath, but said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.” If the inference, that He thus made Himself equal with God, was drawn

* John v. 17, 18.

by the apostle ; this would at once supply our proof. But if it was drawn only by the Jews, and made by them an additional charge against Him ; let us see what grounds they had for it, and how He meets it.

As to the grounds of the accusation, they were amply supplied by our Lord Himself. For how did the Jews understand that, in saying “ My Father worketh hitherto,” He said that God was His Father ? He had not said, “ God worketh hitherto ; He is my Father, and I also work.” The only intimation He had given, that by His Father He meant God, was in the expression, “ worketh hitherto ;” by which consequently He meant, and they understood, the performance of works peculiar to God. It was in this manner He had said that God was His Father : and when He added, “ I also work ;” using the same expression of Himself by which He had indicated that by His Father He meant God ; He attributed to Himself also the performance of works peculiar to God : and thus He was necessarily to be under-

stood, and we know that the Jews did understand Him, as making Himself equal with God in His power, and calling Himself the Son of God in a sense, in which He must be equal with Him in all other respects in which the Son can be equal with the Father.

It was not to be expected, therefore, that our blessed Lord should deny the inference which the Jews had thus drawn from His words. Nor does He: on the contrary, He admits, explains, and still further proves it; only guarding them against one error;—that while He made Himself equal with God, they should not suppose that He meant it in such a sense, as to be a rival, or another, God. “Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” The Son, being of the Father, all His powers are of the Father; and He Himself is subordinate, or subject as the Son, to Him. He can do nothing of Himself, and therefore can do nothing more than the

Father. But what He seeth the Father do, these He also can do even of Himself : “ for whatsoever the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise ; ” and therefore He does nothing less than the Father. “ The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth ; and He will shew Him greater works than these. As the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will.—As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” And being thus equal in power with God, yet as a Son with His Father, so also He is to receive equal honour : “ for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son ; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him.”

Thus then, first, He called Himself the Son of God, and ascribed to Himself the performance of works peculiar to God : and secondly, when accused of making

Himself thereby equal with God; so far from withdrawing His claim or explaining it away, He only guards against its being perverted to a polytheistic sense; and affirms in a yet more particular manner, that He can do all things that the Father doeth; consequently that His power is equal to the Father's, though it is derived from Him; and that the Father had committed to His sole care one of the most important of the Creator's functions, the execution of universal judgment, in order “that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.”

On another occasion, He said: “I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones to stone Him,—saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not

written in your law, I said ye are gods. If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken ; say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest ; because I said, I am the Son of God ? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.. But if I do, though ye believe not me, yet believe the works : that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in Him. Therefore they sought again to take Him ; but He escaped out of their hands^f."

Our blessed Saviour, then, was accused of blasphemy, because He made Himself God, that is, represented Himself as God. And His vindication must needs have required one of these two courses : either to admit that He did make Himself God, but was God ; or to deny that He made Himself God : either to admit the fact, but disprove the crime ; or to deny both. And considering that He sought not His own glory, and made Himself of no reputation ; we should expect beforehand,

^f John x. 28—39.

that His admission would be, not direct, but tacit and implied : while the same considerations, together with His piety and zeal for the Divine honour, would entitle us to expect with unerring confidence, that His denial would be instant and unequivocal. A direct avowal that He was God, would have been beside the purposes of His mission : but if He was not God, an indirect, and much more an equivocal, denial that He made Himself God, would have been utterly abhorrent from His character.

That He did formally or directly deny having made Himself God, no one, I believe, has yet been encouraged to assert. And that He did not unequivocally deny it, is abundantly proved by the fact, that the utmost ingenuity of the heterodox has never yet succeeded in perverting His words into a stronger appearance of a denial, than what is to be conjectured from a stupid and unmeaning evasion, alike injurious to His character, irrelevant to the question, and at variance with the context : for they represent Him as pleading to the

charge of having made Himself God in such a sense as to be blasphemy in a mere man, that He would have been justified in calling Himself a god in the sense in which men have on one occasion been called gods in Scripture: as vindicating Himself from a crime of the gravest import, by pleading that if He had chosen, He might have done another thing, totally different and blameless.

Nor did the Jews understand Him as denying that He made Himself God, or as explaining His pretensions so as to accommodate them to the notion of His mere humanity. On the contrary, they must have understood Him as vindicating and persisting in pretensions which they regarded as criminal in the highest possible degree: for we find, that on the conclusion of His address, their hostility was in no respect diminished, and that “they sought again to take Him.” And as it was neither a subject nor a time for an enigmatical denial: as the Divine honour, the interests of truth and godliness, the objects of His life, His character and safety, were impli-

cated in too great a degree, for Him to express His denial in a manner which would leave it in the least obscurity or uncertainty; He must have spoken in terms, which His hearers could not but correctly understand.

Since, then, He did not formally or unequivocally deny that He made Himself God; and since the Jews,—whom He, who spake with a wisdom and a knowledge of men, unequalled by man, must have intended to understand Him plainly,—yet understood Him as neither denying it, nor explaining His pretensions so as to prove that their charge was without foundation; it cannot be maintained that any such denial or explanation was meant by Him.

We shall therefore inquire, whether, on the other hand, He admitted and vindicated His making Himself God. Now His not giving a direct or unequivocal denial, or reconciling His pretensions with the notion of His mere humanity, is itself the admission required. There was no middle course: He must either have admitted or denied it: and if He did not

deny it, He must be regarded as admitting it.

But that we may keep the proofs of His admission independent of the disproof of His denial; let us consider the facts of the case, and see whether He did, or admitted that He did, make Himself God. One of these points established, the other will unavoidably follow: for if He did, He would not deny, but would at least tacitly admit it; or if He admitted it, we must grant that He would not admit that which was untrue. In the brief discourse then, in which the Jews thought He made Himself God, we find that He called God, His Father, and therefore Himself, the Son of God, in a peculiar and exclusive sense; saying, “ My Father,” and thus making a marked distinction between His Sonship and that of all others, and appropriating His solely to Himself. He represents Himself, moreover, as the giver of eternal life; affirmed the same extent of power both of Himself and of His Father, in a matter the most important of all others to the whole race of man; and implied the co-

operation, union, or rather unity, of their power, in the perpetual preservation of the faithful: while at the same time, He studiously observed their personal distinctions, relation, or order, as Father and Son, and the derivation of the Son from the Father: that is to say, He described Himself as the only Son of God, in such a sense as to be the giver and eternal preserver of spiritual life, and exercising one power with and from the Father, in this work of infinite love.

And what was this, but, as the Jews inferred, to make Himself God? For though men may, by a Divine commission, proclaim eternal life, and may, consequently, be the means by which it is communicated; yet it can never be, or be called, their gift. None but God, most high and only wise, can give and preserve unto eternal life. And if it had not been truly and properly His gift, the meek and lowly Jesus would never have said, “I—give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand:” He would never have assumed to

Himself so much as even the figurative donation of so great a blessing. The Jews, indeed, were little disposed, or able, to apply to the interpretation of His language, the key which we in this and many other cases have, in His righteous and self-denying character: but they as little suspected those figures which modern objectors are so fond of discovering, when the plain truth is inconvenient to their purpose. They would try His language by such a broad and plain principle, as they did in another case, when they said, “Who can forgive sins, but God only?” and ask in their own minds, Who can give eternal life, but God only?

When, therefore, our blessed Saviour had represented Himself as the only Son of God, possessing and exercising even those attributes of God which of all others are the most important to man, and those powers which can be possessed and exercised by God alone; He would not, and cannot rightly, be understood otherwise than as making Himself God: and this, by the manner in which He did it, not

in any figurative, or inferior, but in the true and highest, sense.

A further assertion of the same thing is found in the declaration, “I and my Father are one.” He does not say “one person,” which from the very terms would have had to be interpreted of a figurative unity: but “one thing;” which we are equally compelled to interpret of an unity of nature. And when we ascribe an unity of nature to two or more persons, we mean that they have individually, one and the self-same nature: as Peter, Paul, and Timothy, had each of them, individually, one and the self-same nature of man, each being perfect man. And thus, when we say of the Father and the Son, or of the whole three Persons of the Trinity together, that they are one in nature; we mean that they have each, individually, the one and the self-same Divine nature, so that each is perfect God: while the Divine nature, unlike every other, being indivisible, they are not three Gods, but one God.

The adversaries of the Catholic doctrine

will, however, have it, that as our Lord in other places prays thus for His disciples: “I pray—that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:—that they may be one, even as we are one: I in thee, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one^s:” we are not to understand Him in this place, as asserting any unity between the Father and Himself, but such as may subsist among Christians; an unity of “design, action or operation, agreement or affection^b,” and not of nature; a figurative, not a natural or essential, unity.

But this objection hardly holds together while one may utter it, and crumbles into pieces on the first touch. For its architects have overlooked, or think that their readers may chance to overlook, the obvious and palpable facts; that all men are one in nature, or, of one nature; since we have all one fatherⁱ, “and God hath made of

^s John xvii. 21—23. ^b Belsham, Calm Inquiry, 235. Carpenter's Comparative View, 17. Imp. Version in loc. ⁱ Mal. ii. 10.

one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth^k:” that all Christians are one in a renewed nature, or of one renewed nature; having put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created^l them: that if it is an unity of design, action, or affection, for which our Lord prays on their behalf, He prays that this unity may be superadded to the twofold unity previously subsisting amongst them; so that they may be not only essentially and spiritually, but morally one: and consequently that the analogy, instead of disproving, will require and prove, an unity of nature, as well as of affection, design, or action, between the Father and the Son.

And though we were to suppose that the words “ I and my Father are one,” do not strictly and primarily mean, yet they will strictly and immediately infer, that they are one in nature. For how, in that case, did He mean that they were one; but in those designs, works, and attributes, which He had specified or

^k Acts xvii. 26.

^l Col. iii. 10.

necessarily implied? and, those attributes being Divine; we must conceive them to be one also, in their sole and indivisible foundation or subject, the Divine nature or essence.

Having therefore described Himself as the only Son of God ; having ascribed to Himself the attributes and power of God ; and having declared that He was one thing, one essence, or nature, with God : He would not deny that He made Himself God. And on examination of His defence, we shall find that He did not deny it ; but that He admitted it, in the manner in which His mission as Messiah, and His being not then “glorified,” teach us to expect He would. As He had before, not directly, but constructively, made Himself God ; so now He tacitly and indirectly admits it ; while He vindicates Himself from the charge of blasphemy, by appealing to His works as an incontrovertible proof of His mission from the Father, and consequently of the truth of every word which He had spoken.

“ If He called them gods,” He said ;—

if the author of the eighty-second Psalm gave the title of gods to those unjust judges and rulers, “unto whom the word of God came; and the Scripture cannot be broken;”—and the Scripture, of which that Psalm is a part, cannot be discredited or rejected, as untrue, or not “given by inspiration of God:” “say ye of Him whom the Father hath sent,” that He should bear witness unto the truth, and whose word is therefore of even greater authority than that of the Psalmist;—“say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?” If ye compare my authority with that of the Psalmist, mine truly is greater: for “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world,” for the express purpose of declaring His will and truth to mankind. Or if ye compare my claims, as accredited by my works, to the title of the Son of God, with the claims of those to the name of gods, whom the Psalmist so called:—they were men with whom God communicated by His word delivered to them by His

inspired servants, and who had no claim whatever to the title ; but I do the works of my Father, and have come forth immediately from Him. And if the Psalmist without blasphemy called men like himself gods,—gave the sacred name to those who were no gods : do ye call it blasphemy, when I, who am sent from the Father, tell you that which I am, the Son of God ? If the Divine title has been given without blasphemy to those who were no gods ; much more shall I be blameless, when I call myself that which I really am, though it involve the assumption of “ the great and fearful name ? ” If, indeed, I do not prove in perfect truth that I am the Son of God ; “ if I do not the works of my Father,” the works as of the only-begotten Son of God ; “ believe me not.—But if I do,” and ye nevertheless disbelieve my word, yet at least believe my works : that from these infallible proofs, “ ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him ;” and that therefore I spake the truth, and not blasphemy, when I said, I am

the Son of God, and that I and my Father are one.

Such are the force and bearing of our Saviour's defence; and it is pregnant with meaning, with respect to what it omits, as well as to what it contains. He does not deny that He made Himself God. He does not ask, *Do I make myself God?* but "*Say ye—Thou blasphemest;*—because I said I am the Son of God?" He finds no fault with their concluding that He made himself God; but only with their accusing Him of blasphemy for what He had said. He denies not the fact, but only the crime which they founded upon it, and this He denied in no other way, than by vindicating His right to be believed, and the truth of every word He had uttered. He pays no respect to the objection, that His humanity is irreconcileable with His Godhead: an objection which the Unitarians, on the contrary, and they who participate in their system of disbelief, so highly value, and think of so great importance, that it forms the warp or the woof of the greater part of

their arguments. Nor does He, as they would have instructed Him, urge His humanity as a proof that He could not intend to make Himself God; and that His expressions must therefore be taken figuratively, and in no higher sense than is applicable to a mere man. Nor yet does He appeal to the doctrine which the Unitarians assert was maintained by the Jews, of the personal unity of God; and argue, that when He had spoken of God as His Father and as distinct from Himself, He could not be supposed to make Himself God. And lastly, He neither gives His hearers to understand, as an Unitarian writer covertly insinuates^m, that the title, Son of God, is not equal or superior to the title of gods, in the passage he had quoted: nor, as the Unitarian argument on the place would otherwise require, that He whom He called His Father, was God only in the sense in which those spoken of by the Psalmist, were gods.

But instead of abating one tittle in any one respect, from the force of the expres-

^m Belsham, Calm Inquiry, p. 219.

sions He had used ; He, on the contrary, vindicates their truth ; argues that He called Himself nothing more than what He proved Himself to be ; and while He re-asserts that He was the Son of God, He pledges his works to the truth of the specific point, that the Father was in Him and He in the Father, and thus that they were one ; as a testimony which they who would not believe His word on the general authority of His works, could not, even on their own grounds, consistently reject.

From an attentive review of the case, therefore, we find that our blessed Lord both called Himself the Son of God in such a sense, as to make Himself God and one in nature with God ; and notwithstanding the urgent peril of His situation, tacitly admitted having done so : that while He vindicated Himself from the charge of blasphemy which was founded upon it, He adhered to, and re-asserted, His pretensions without any abatement or extenuation ; and pledged His works, and therein the witness of God, in specific attestation to their truth.

Another instance, similar to these, is too important to be passed over. When on the night before He suffered, “the chief priests, and elders, and all the council,” had in vain “sought false-witness against Him to put Him to death; the high priest answered and said unto Him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of Godⁿ. ” They thought Him to be a mere man: and this question, enforced by the adjuration of the high priest, was in every way calculated to ensnare Him. For though He had never yet publicly and directly proclaimed Himself as the Christ, the Son of God; still He had given the most abundant evidence in His works and conduct, and the most explicit declarations, short only of saying, “I am He;” all tending to make them “know and believe,” that He possessed that most sacred character and dignity.

His enemies were, therefore, aware, that if He said He was not the Son of God, there would be the most ample grounds

ⁿ Matt. xxvi. 59, 60, 63.

for exposing Him to the world, as a self-acknowledged impostor: but if He answered in the affirmative to their question, they were prepared to condemn Him as a blasphemer; putting that question to Him, as they did, in a meaning in which it would be blasphemous for a mere man thus to answer it. What course they might have taken, if He had declined to answer, it would be idle to inquire. Doubtless they thought to extort some answer on which they might condemn Him: and even His silence, when solemnly adjured and put on His oath to the living God, would most probably have been a crime of no ordinary magnitude. But his hour was now come; and having finished the work which the Father had given Him to do, He at length pronounced the word, which was to let loose the fury of His enemies, and, through it, invest the Maker, with the character of the Redeemer, of the world. Nay, He formally presented His avowal in the aspect which, of all others, would most exasperate their rage: placing His acknowledgment that He was the

Son of God in direct contrast with His humanity, and with His return, even in their day, with a “dominion” which should be “everlasting,” and a kingdom which “should not be destroyed.” “Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.”

“ Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy: what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.”

The alleged crime, therefore, for which they condemned our Saviour to death, was blasphemy; and this, not because He had applied to Himself the prophecy of Daniel relating to the Son of Man; but as we find from the narrative of St. Luke^p, and especially from the report of this decision of the council to Pilate mentioned by St. John, “because He made Himself the Son of God^q. ”

^o Daniel vii. 14. Matt. xxvi. 64, 65.
xxii. 70, 71.

^q John xix. 7.

^p Luke

Now the Jews gave the name of blasphemy to the crime of speaking in the most injurious manner possible of another person or thing. God^r and His name^s; Christ^t and His name^u; the Holy Spirit^x; the word^y, the doctrine^z, and the law^a, of God; the tabernacle^b and the temple^c; they that dwell in heaven^d; Moses^e, St. Paul, Christians^f, and men^g generally; are spoken of as having been blasphemed:—with, however, this distinction; that when the crime was, or was alleged to have been, committed against any other than God, the word was always used with some appropriate adjunct, referring to the person or thing injured: but where it was used absolutely, or without any adjunct or qualification; and a person, as our blessed Saviour in this case, was simply accused of blasphemy; it signified that the injury was considered to have been done against God. And as against God, blasphemy was either in

^r Ezek. xx. 27. ^s Ps. lxxiv. 10. ^t Luke xxii. 65.

^u Jas. ii. 7. ^x Mark iii. 29. ^y Tit. ii. 5. ^z 1 Tim.

vi. 1. ^a Acts vi. 13. ^b Rev. xiii. 6. ^c Acts vi. 13.

^d Rev. xiii. 6. ^e Acts vi. 11. ^f Rom. iii. 8. 1 Cor.

iv. 13. ^g Tit. iii. 2.

speaking evil of Him; or in ascribing to one's self or to another, or refusing to God, that which belongs to Him.

Hence we shall easily perceive in what way the avowal of our Lord was thought to have amounted to this crime. For to call Himself the Son of God, was not to speak evil of God; nor was it to refuse to Him, or to ascribe to another that which belongs to Him: but it was to ascribe it to Himself. And as that which He ascribed to Himself was something which it was thought blasphemous for a mere man to claim; and the general affirmation that He was the Son of God, was not to assume any particular attribute or prerogative of God; it only remains, that by assuming the title “Son of God,” they would, and He knew that they would, conceive Him to claim an identity or unity of nature with God.

This therefore He did claim, when He answered, “I am” the Son of God: and thus, having in the two preceding instances taken this title upon Him in such a manner as to make Himself God, and equal, and one in nature, with God; He has thrice given the

positive proof which we desired, that as it is not in any other respect, so it is in respect of a truly Divine nature, that He is the only begotten Son of God.

In attestation of this He laid down His life: and by His resurrection from the dead, the great Father and Judge of all bare His record to its truth, and commended Him to the world as His only begotten Son, “of one substance, power, and eternity with Him.”

Some, however, when forced to admit this doctrine, yet argue that the title of Son implies posteriority of time, and inferiority of power, to the Father. But this is to measure the nature and powers of God by the imperfect analogies of our own: as if there could be any succession of time, any gradation or division of powers, in the pure and indivisible essence of the Most High. In it “none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than another;” all is “coeternal together and coequal.” But while there is perfect equality and unity, there is also perfect order. The Father is of none; the Son, of the Father; the Holy Spirit, of the Father and

the Son : not in succession of time, but in order and relation of persons, and in unity of substance.

Being then the only-begotten Son of God, of one substance, power, and eternity, with the Father ; our Lord Jesus Christ is, as the Nicene Creed expresses it, “ very God of very God.” And in this sense, the supreme name is ascribed to Him in various places of the New Testament.

Of these, the first we shall consider, because it will prepare our way for the others, is the opening verse of St. John’s Gospel: “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Different sections of disbelievers in the Trinity, propose different interpretations of this passage. Some, denying the personality of the Word, would substitute Wisdom or Reason as the proper representative of the original term ; and would read the passage thus : “ In the beginning was Wisdom, and Wisdom was with God, and God was Wisdom.” This, however, is a construction which demands no minute

inquiry into its merits : for when we read in the sequel, that this “ wisdom came to its own land, and its own people received it not ;” that this “ wisdom became man, and dwelt among us, and we beheld its glory, the glory as of the well-beloved of the Father, full of grace and truth :” the meanest understanding must perceive, that it is refuted beyond all hope, by its own intrinsic absurdity.

Others, maintaining the personality of the Word, and that the Word is Christ, say, that “ in the beginning,” means “ from the commencement of His public ministry;” and transform the simple proposition, “ in the beginning was the Word,” into an assurance that, “ from the commencement of His public ministry, Jesus was a teacher of truth and life^h. ” But there are several irremediable and fatal defects in this : for “ in” and “ from, the beginning,” are by no means synonymous : much less is “ in the beginning,” equivalent to “ from the commencement of our Saviour’s public ministry.” Sometimes, indeed, “ from the

^h Belsham’s Calm Inquiry, 30.

beginning," does mean "from the first preaching of the Gospel, or the commencement of the ministry of Christ; but this meaning is always clearly pointed out by the context requiring it, and allowing of no other: as when our blessed Lord acknowledged to His disciples, "ye have been with me from the beginningⁱ";" where it is manifest that the beginning referred to, can be no other than that of His ministry. And the expression, "in" or "from, the beginning," is never put absolutely and without qualification, which is the case here, in any other reference than to the creation, as in the pious address of the Psalmist, "Thy word is true from the beginning^k";" and in our Lord's explanation of the law of divorce; "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so!"

If it be pleaded that the expression is not absolute, but that it is qualified by the two following verses:—"the same was in the beginning with God: all things were

ⁱ John xv. 27.

^k Ps. cxix. 60.

^l Matt. xix. 8.

made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made:”—we have before^m proved that the creation of the world is attributed to the Word in these verses; and hence it follows, that the beginning intended by St. John, is the beginning of the creation of the world.

Moreover, the advocates of this interpretation, metamorphose the simple proposition, “was the Word,” or “the Word was,” into “Jesus was a teacher of truth and life.” And they can arrive at this, only by the following peculiar process. First, they lay it down that “the Logos,” or the Word, “is the man Jesus Christ, the teacher of truth and lifeⁿ;” which converts “in the beginning was the Word,” into “in the beginning was the man Jesus Christ, the teacher of truth and life:” and then by that critical legerdemain in which they are so expert, they change it into the form, “in the beginning Jesus was a teacher of truth and life.” It is grievous to repeat such frivolities from this sacred place; but the responsibility lies not on

^m Page 192.

ⁿ Belsham’s Calm Inquiry, 27, 30.

us, but on those who place us under the necessity either of exposing them, or of betraying the fundamental truths of the Gospel to the veriest mockery of criticism, of reasoning, and of common sense.

Again: some understand the term “God,” in the last clause of the verse,—“the Word was God,”—as meaning another god than the Father, or a created god, yet the creator of all other creatures: others attribute to it still lower senses: and after one or two steps, the heresy in its natural course, descends to that lowest depth, where it symbolizes with the creed of Mohammed; makes the Son of God “altogether such an one as” ourselves; and represents the beloved disciple as investing his Master with the title of God in that low, empty, and perhaps even ironical sense, in which wicked men, on one occasion, were called gods.

In behalf of these different interpretations, eighteen places of the Old Testament, and two of the New, are brought forward. But one of these from the New Testament, and fourteen from the Old, are altogether

inapplicable: two more from the Old, rest upon the false supposition, that the Greek and Hebrew words for God, are used invariably in the same manner, and have mutually the same signification: and the remaining two are identified with the second instance from the New Testament, and shall be considered with it. That instance is contained in a passage, which we have, indeed, already examined at some length; though without reference to this particular question.

“ Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came,—say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?”

The argument of the Unipersonalists from this place is, in effect, that by our Saviour’s acknowledgment here, men were called gods, because the word of God came unto them; that, as the word of God came unto and by Him, He may therefore be called a god in this sense; and that there

is nothing to shew that St. John in his first verse, ascribed the title of God to Him in any higher sense. But they do not themselves feel perfectly satisfied with this plea: for otherwise, why should they be so anxious on all occasions to deny, where they can elaborate even the shadow of a pretence for it, that our Saviour is called god? And, indeed, their involuntary dissatisfaction is not without several good reasons.

Their plea misrepresents our Lord's argument, by making that which He used only to describe the persons who were called gods, to be the reason why they were so called. He does not say, "If he called them gods, because the word of God came unto them:" nor is there in the whole Scripture, one single proof that any were ever called gods or god for such a reason.

The Psalm itself will best shew, why the persons there spoken of received this title. "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: He judgeth among the gods. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the

persons of the ungodly?—I have said, ye are gods: and all of you are children of the Most High. But——ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.” They were “mighty” men, governors, or judges, whom the writer of the Psalm addressed: and we see there that He gave them the title of gods, either on account of their authority and power, or because they were “children of the Most High.”

If, then, our blessed Saviour was styled God, for the same reason that they were called gods; this will lead us to a conclusion, not at all acceptable to the opponents of the Catholic doctrine. The authority of those mentioned in the Psalm was limited; He has “all power in heaven and in earth;” their power was earthly; His, heavenly: theirs, worldly; His, spiritual: theirs, temporal; His, knowing no end: they “died like men, and fell like one of the princes;” He is the God, who, as the inspired writer prays in the following verse, shall “arise to judge the earth,” and shall “inherit all nations.” They again were “children of the Most High;”

but so are all men, and therefore as well entitled as they to be called gods on this ground: while the Lord Jesus is the only begotten Son of God, of one nature with His Father. So that, whichever of the two reasons be preferred, they will each lead to the same result: that those addressed by the Psalmist were, as of course none will dispute, figurative and imaginary gods; but our most blessed Redeemer, the real and true God, “ very God of very God.”

The heterodox argument has another defect, which invalidates together the three connected instances on which it is founded: it assumes that they are parallel to the proposition, “ the Word was God.” But the use of the plural “ gods” in those instances, and of the singular in this, does away at once with the notion of any necessary parallelism in the case. For as there is only one true God; none who are not truly God, can be called gods, under the sanction of Scripture, in any other than a highly figurative sense: the title, god, on the other hand, may be used in either

a figurative or a literal application. But when it is used in a figurative application, it is always in a manner which can give rise to no ambiguity or mistake. Thus in one place brought from the Old Testament,—“ I have made thee a god to Pharaoh;” every one must perceive the figurative use of the term god: whereas in the place of St. John,—“ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;” there is nothing whatever to shew that it is figuratively used. We only require, indeed, to put the two places,—“ I have made thee a god to Pharaoh,” and, “ the Word was God,” thus in juxtaposition, to demonstrate that they are of a very different class, one from the other.

But the notion of any parallelism favourable to the objectors in the case, will be at once destroyed by a reference to our Saviour’s argument. He pleads, that if the authority of inspiration or the Scripture, protected the writer of the Psalm from blame, in calling men gods; neither was

^o Exod. vii. 1.

He, who gave the people proof before their own eyes, of at least equal authority, to be condemned, when He called Himself the Son of God : and that, while the Psalmist had called men what they were not, He had called Himself nothing more than His works, and therein the incontrovertible record of the Most High, proved that He, in reality and truth, was ; the Son of God, one in nature with God. This passage, therefore, so much relied on by the deniers of the Trinity, to prove that our blessed Saviour is called god, for the same reason and in the same sense as mere men were, “in Jewish phraseology,” called gods, is directly against them : since it shews that they were so styled only by a figure ; but He, being in truth the Son of God, and of one nature with His Father, has, in consequence, the title of God ascribed to Him in the highest sense.

And as for the assumption, which concludes the objection under review,—that there is nothing to shew any intention on the part of St. John in his first verse, to affirm the proper godhead of the Word ;

nothing can be more opposite to the truth. The keenest search cannot discover one example, from Genesis to Revelation, where any person or being is simply and without qualification pronounced to be god, as it is here said that “the Word was God,” in any other than the highest acceptation. And when the context teaches us, as we have seen, that the Word was in the beginning of the creation; that He was then with God; that all things were made by Him; and that, since He was with God at the beginning of the creation, “without Him was not any one thing made that was made;” we cannot imagine a more direct and absolute contradiction to the heterodox theory, nor a better authority for concluding, that by the proposition, “the Word was God,” the Evangelist meant to call Him truly and supremely God.

Here, however, we come into immediate collision with the theory, that the Word was another god than the Father, an inferior or created god, yet the creator of all other creatures. But without more than adverting to the utter repugnance

between this hypothesis, and the first principles of all religion, we shall irrecoverably overthrow it by the following out of many similar texts. “Thou shalt have no other gods before me^p. I am the Lord, and there is none else: there is no god beside me^q. Is there a god besides me? yea, there is no god: I know not any^r.”

Having thus seen the futility of those arguments, by which the opponents of our doctrine endeavour to prove, that when our Lord Jesus Christ is called god in the New Testament, it is in an inferior or figurative sense: we require little more than a brief enumeration of those other places where this title is ascribed to Him.

Of these, the first in order is that passage of St. Matthew’s Gospel^s, where it is written, “Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring

^p Exod. xx. 3.

^q Isa. xlv. 5.

^r Ibid. xliv. 8.

^s Chap. i. 22, 23.

forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.” The phrase, “they shall call his name,” is used in the Scriptures to signify either literally, “he shall be called,” or “he shall be.” If then our Lord Jesus Christ was to be literally called by this name, “it is a vain imagination to think that He is not what He is called.” But as He is not once called by this name throughout the whole of the New Testament; it follows, that the words of the prophet adopted by the Evangelist are to be taken as a direct assertion that He is Emmanuel, God with us.

Against the remaining testimonies to the Godhead of our Lord and Saviour, no objection is made, which admits of discussion from this place. Of some it is acknowledged, that “strictness of grammatical construction” refers them to Him: but the objectors endeavour to get rid of them

¹ Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. II. “His only Son.”

all by arguments, of which it is sufficient merely to say, that they set all the rules of impartial criticism, and of grammatical propriety, at defiance ; and are completely nullified by that ever-recurring vice of the heterodox arguments, from the Semi-arian down to the lowest pseudo-Unitarian, namely, the assumption, for an undoubted truth, of that which they profess to prove.

The testimonies to which we allude, are these.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians^u, that blessed state, which is the object of the Christian's hope, is called in the English, “the kingdom of Christ and of God :” but the original requires that it should be read, “the kingdom of the Christ and God,” that is, of Him who is both Christ and God. And in another Epistle^x, the inspired writer affirms, that the Son of God is addressed in these words of the forty-fifth Psalm ; “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” St. Peter calls Him “our God and Saviour Jesus Christ^y :” for so it

^u Chap. v. 5.

^x Heb. i. 8.

^y 2 Pet. i. 1.

is in the original. St. John teaches us, that He is “the true God and eternal life^a. ” St. Paul calls Him “the great God^a,” and says that He is “over all, God blessed for ever^b. ”

The Epistle to the Hebrews^c ascribes to Him the name of Jehovah, teaching us that He is spoken of in the following words of the hundred and second Psalm: “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands.”

St. Luke relates^d, that the angel, who appeared to Zacharias, styled the coming deliverer, “the Lord God of Israel;” and the apostle, St. Thomas, in a passage formerly noticed^e, addressed Him in a most solemn act of faith and worship, as “his Lord and his God.”

This act of faith was commended, this worship accepted: and in confidence that the same faith and worship will be graciously accepted now, let us also adore Him

^a 1 John v. 20.

^a Tit. ii. 13.

^b Rom. ix. 5.

^c Chap. i. 10.

^d Luke i. 16, 17.

^e John xx. 28.

as our Lord and our God; and confess that to Him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, belong all praise, and honour, and glory, and dominion, for ever and ever.

S E R M O N VII.

ACTS V. 3, 4.

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

OUR review of the principal evidence of the New Testament for the Godhead of the second Person of the Trinity, the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, having been completed, as far as our limits would allow, in the preceding Lecture ; we have, at this time, to take a similar review of the evidence from the same part of Scripture, for the Personality and Godhead of the third Person, the Holy Ghost or the Spirit of God.

It will be observed that we propose the personality of the Divine Spirit for consideration, as well as His Godhead; and also that it is His personality as the Third Person, that is, as distinct from the Father and the Son, which we intend; for it is the Catholic doctrine, that “there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty coeternal:” and this doctrine is impugned, as in other respects, so in these; that while some admit the personality of the Holy Ghost, they yet deny His true Godhead; some deny both His Godhead and His personality; and some, while they affirm that He is God, yet identify Him in person with the Father, or with both the Father and the Son.

We proceed therefore to review the evidence of His distinct personality.

In that most affecting discourse, which is contained in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters of the Gospel according to St. John, our blessed Saviour

consoles His disciples under the prospect of His departure, with the promise of another Comforter, who “would abide with them for ever.” He explains to them, that this Comforter or Advocate was the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost: and He says, “The Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, which the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you^a:”—“When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me^b:”—“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you: and when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment^c:”—“When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will shew you

^a John xiv. 26.

^b Chap. xv. 36.

^c Chap. xvi. 7, 8.

things to come: He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you^d."

"Peter and the other apostles," when vindicating their conduct and the faith of Christ before the Jewish council, said, "We are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him^e."

"The apostles, elders, and brethren," at Jerusalem, when giving their decision of a controversy submitted to them on behalf of the Gentile brethren "in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia," thus address the appellants: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than" certain "necessary things^f."

St. Paul teaches us, that "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit:" that "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered; and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for us ac-

^d John xvi. 13, 14. ^e Acts v. 32. ^f Acts xv. 22—29.

cording to the will of God^{g.}" And the same apostle, writing to the Corinthians, says, that "God hath revealed unto us by His Spirit, the things He hath prepared for them that love Him: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God^{h.}"

Since then the Holy Ghost was sent by the Son from the Father, and by the Father in the Son's name; since He "proceedeth from the Father," and was given by Him "to them that obey Him;" since He maketh intercession for us with the Father; since He receiveth of the things of Christ, and "searcheth the deep things of God" the Father: the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is distinct from the Father and the Son. And as all the several actions of teaching, reminding, testifying, reproving, guiding into all the truth, hearing, speaking, shewing things to come, receiving of Christ's, and shewing it unto the apostles,

^g Rom. viii. 16, 26, 27.

^h 1 Cor. ii. 9, 11.

witnessing, approving or determining, bearing witness with our spirit, making intercession for us, searching and knowing the deep things of God; are the actions of a person, or the operations of an intelligent agent: the Holy Ghost, whose operations and actions they are, is an intelligent agent or person. And therefore we conclude on clear and certain evidence, that the Holy Spirit both is a person; and, as a person, is distinct from the Father and the Son.

In addition to these proofs of the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost, the following are proofs of His personality simply. He is said to willⁱ, to speak expressly^k, to send^l, prevent^m, commandⁿ, forbid^o, to call ministers of the Gospel^p, to send them forth^q, to appoint them to their spheres of duty^r, to distribute miraculous gifts as He will^s, to be grieved^t and tempted^u, to dwell in Christians as in His temple^x, to

ⁱ 1 Cor. xii. 11.

^k 1 Tim. iv. 1.

^l Acts x. 20.

^m Acts xvi. 7.

ⁿ Acts xi. 12.

^o Acts xvi. 6.

^p Acts xiii. 2.

^q Acts xiii. 4.

^r Acts xx. 28.

^s 1 Cor. xii. 4, 11.

^t Eph. iv. 30.

^u Acts v. 19.

^x 1 Cor. iii. 16. and vi. 19.

comfort them^y, and to quicken their mortal bodies^z.

Here, however, will be interposed the objection, that though all these things which we have taken for proof of personality, would fully warrant our conclusion, if they were properly attributed to the Holy Ghost; yet as they may be, or are, attributed figuratively, our conclusion does not immediately, or even at all, follow. And the objection is made on these grounds: that “things are attributed to the Holy Spirit, which do not at all agree with the nature or idea of a person^a:” and that personal operations and properties are frequently attributed in the Scriptures to things which are not persons.

But the former of these positions is directly and wholly untrue: for it confounds together two uses and meanings of the original word for “spirit,” which every one, possessing a very small portion of the rudiments of knowledge necessary for the interpretation of the New Testa-

^y John xiv. 16, 17. ^z Rom. viii. 11. ^a Cat. Racov. cap. vi.

ment, knows are perfectly distinct and different from each other; and it applies to spirit in one sense, that which is said of it when it is used in the other. The Scripture informs us of one Spirit, who is called pre-eminently, absolutely, and definitely, THE Spirit, The Holy Spirit, The Spirit of God, The Spirit of promise, The Spirit of truth, The Spirit of Christ: and also of A spirit, A holy spirit, which is never called The spirit or The holy spirit, except either as previously mentioned in the context;—as when, according to the original, it is related, that “the apostles Peter and John prayed that” the new converts at Samaria “might receive a holy spirit;” that “then laid they their hands on them, and they received a holy spirit;” and that Simon Magus, when he “saw that through laying on of the apostles’ hands the holy spirit,”—namely, which the apostles had prayed for, and the converts had received,—“was given, offered them money, saying, Give me this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive a holy spirit^b:” or

^b Acts xiii. 14—19.

else, as meaning that spirit, or spiritual influence or grace which is the grand promise of the Gospel in this world;—as when we are admonished that we “Quench not the spirit.”

Now it is of THE Spirit, pre-eminently, absolutely, and definitely so called, that those personal actions noticed by us are affirmed: and it is to the spirit, never definitely so called, but in such a reference as I have explained, that any thing which may be supposed contrary to the nature of a person is ascribed.

But even if the use and meaning of “spirit” were the same in each case; and whether the holy spirit be taken in a personal or impersonal sense; the things supposed to be contrary to the notion of a person, which are ascribed to the spirit, are yet equally figurative: they cannot be interpreted in a literal or proper sense either of the influences of the Holy Spirit, or of His Person. The holy spirit is said, for instance, to be poured forth; but an influence, power, operation, or quality, can

^c 1 Thess. v. 19.

no more be poured forth in a literal sense, than a person. And if such expressions as this may be figuratively interpreted in the one case, they may also in the other. And, on the other hand, if an impersonal individual can be figuratively said to do that which is proper to a person, that which is proper to an impersonal individual may, by a similar figure, be ascribed to a person. If an inanimate thing can be figuratively said to speak; a person may, with equal propriety, be said to be poured forth. There is not, therefore, any more contradiction to personality in those impersonal things attributed to the holy spirit, than there is to impersonality in those personal characters attributed to things which are not persons: that is to say, there is no contradiction whatsoever in the case.

The second position, which alleges that personal operations and properties are frequently attributed in the Scriptures to things which are not persons, is of no more force than this:—that as language, denoting such operations and properties,

is sometimes used in a figurative and impersonal sense, and when so used, cannot prove personality; it is necessary to shew that the expressions we have quoted as applied to the Holy Spirit, are used in a proper or personal sense.

Now it is one of the clearest rules of Scriptural interpretation, that before we resort to a figurative or unusual sense, we should ascertain that the literal or ordinary sense involves an impossibility or absurdity, or offends against Christian faith or practice. But as none of these pleas can be maintained concerning the expressions we have quoted in proof of the personality of the Holy Spirit; it remains that those expressions are to be taken in their literal or ordinary, and, therefore, personal, sense. And further; when, as we have before said, nothing contrary to personality is ever applied to the Holy Spirit, concerning whose personality we are inquiring; there cannot be the shadow of a pretence for suggesting, that the expressions in question are to be taken out of their ordinary and personal signification.

These two considerations would, alone, be sufficient to determine the question : but when we carefully examine the several passages, we find not only that they cannot be taken impersonally ; but that in those places where our blessed Lord prepares His disciples for the advent of the Spirit, and gives them more particular information concerning Him than is to be found in any other part of Scripture ; He takes very observable care to mark His personality. It is said : “ The Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, which the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things, whatsoever I have said unto you^d. ” An impersonal individual or thing may bring to remembrance, and teach the meaning of, discourses specifically relating to itself : as the resurrection of our blessed Lord brought His disciples to the remembrance and comprehension of what He had said to them relating to that event : and the coming of the Holy Ghost, might itself remind them, and enable them to understand the meaning, of His revelations to

^d John xiv. 26.

them on that subject. But no impersonal thing, excepting inspiration or a written account, could, or could be said to, teach and bring to their remembrance, not a greater or less number of observations relating to itself, but, every thing which their Master had said to them. That, however, the Holy Ghost, here or anywhere, means a written account, will not be pretended: and if any would urge that it means inspiration, no one instance can be produced, where the expression, pre-eminently and definitely used, as it is in the text before us, The Spirit The Holy, can be shewn to have this meaning.

The parallel passage also,—“ He will guide you into all the truth; for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me; for He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you^e:”—both further evinces the personal signification of the acts attributed to the Holy Ghost in the foregoing passage, and is yet more strictly

^e John xvi. 13, 14.

personal in its own signification. He shall guide into all the truth, first by hearing, and then speaking it, and shewing things to come : He shall glorify Christ, by receiving of Christ's, and shewing it unto His disciples. These are things which cannot be attributed to any other than an intelligent agent or person ; for the meaning of “ He shall guide into all the truth,” is pointed out to be such as is applicable only to an individual who can be said to hear and then to speak what that individual has heard. Indeed, to be fully sensible how impossible it is to interpret these expressions in an impersonal sense, we have only to take the passage, and read it at length, substituting “ inspiration,” or any other impersonal term which may be suggested, for “ the Spirit.” “ Howbeit, when He, inspiration, is come, He will guide you into all the truth : for He,—inspiration,—shall not speak of himself ; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak : and he will shew you things to come.” This were to travesty, not to interpret, the word of God.

Again; when it is said, “ It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us^f;” and when we are exhorted “ not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God^g:” by what figure, could such language be used of any thing impersonal on so serious subjects?

Nor can those words,—“ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities ; for we know not what to pray for as we ought : but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered: and He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for us according to the will of God^h:”—be conceived of any other than a personal spirit. The connexion and force of the place is this : we know not what to pray for as we ought ; but the Spirit knoweth the will of God, and helpeth our infirmities by making intercession for us according to that will : as we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption ; the Spirit in like manner also maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered : and as God

^f Acts xv. 28. ^g Eph. iv. 30. ^h Rom. viii. 26, 27.

knoweth our infirmities, and yet our earnest hope and desire for the redemption of the body, because He searcheth the hearts; so also knoweth He the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for us according to that good and holy will, which God contemplates in Himself. Thus our infirmities are contrasted with the Spirit's strength; our wants with His help; our ignorance with His knowledge; our frailty with His perfections; our groaning ourselves within ourselves, with His groanings which cannot be uttered; our praying for ourselves, with His intercession for us. And it is impossible to give any consistent view of the passage, without allowing the personal sense of the terms applied to the Spirit, and, by consequence, His personality. “ We can understand what are interceding persons, but have no apprehension of interceding or groaning qualities¹,” or of the mind of a quality, knowing what is the will of God.

When also it is said, that “ God hath revealed unto us by His Spirit the things

¹ Pearson on the Creed, Art. VIII.

which He hath prepared for them that love Him: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God: for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God^k:”—there is no rational or consistent way of understanding the passage, but in the sense of the Spirit’s personality. God hath revealed to us by His Spirit the things which He hath prepared; and the Spirit knoweth them, because He searcheth all things, even the deep things of God:—this cannot be said or understood of any quality, influence, or operation, or of any thing impersonal: for how could any thing not a person, be said by any figure to know by searching? Our opponents, indeed, confess as much as that it could not: though they will have it, that the Spirit is the Father Himself; that “the spirit of a man is a man himself; and therefore that by the Spirit of God” the Father, “the apostle means God” the Father

^k 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

“ Himself.” But the argument is vain : for as long as a part is not the whole, and a man is a compound person consisting of body no less, and no less essentially, than of spirit ; it will be evident that the spirit of a man is not a man himself : and therefore this analogy will not bear out the conclusion which is attempted to be forced upon it, that the Spirit of God the Father, is the Father Himself. It is an analogy of essential relation only which is to be found between the spirit of man to man, and the Spirit of God to God : and as the spirit of a man is an integral and distinct part of him, and as there are no parts in God, the Spirit of God is an integral or individual and distinct subsistence in His nature.

And lastly, when it is said ; “ there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit ;” and that “ all these,” namely, the gifts of “ the word of wisdom,” of “ knowledge,” of “ faith,” of “ healing,” of “ the working of miracles,” of “ prophecy,” of discerning

¹ Belsham, Translation of the Epistles of Paul, in loc.

of spirits," of "divers kinds of tongues," of "the interpretation of tongues;" "worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will^m:"—no consistent explanation of the passage can be given, on any other ground than that of the personality of the Spirit. A late writerⁿ, indeed, to whom I have above referred, interprets the commencement of our quotation, "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit," thus: "some have the gift of wisdom, some the gift of knowledge, and some the gift of prophecy; but inspiration is the same, it is the same powerful energy, which communicates one species or degree of illumination or of power to one person, and another to another:" that is to say, with transparent self-contradiction, there are diversities of inspiration, but the inspiration is the same; diversities of illumination, but the illumination is the same; diversities of power, but the power is the same; diversities of gifts, but the gift is the same; diversities of spirits, but the

^m 1 Cor. xii. 4—11.

ⁿ Belsham, in loc.

spirit is the same. Then, having made “ spirit” to signify “ inspiration,”—the channel of the gifts; by a subtle management of words, calculated to mystify and ensnare the careless and ignorant, he makes the same word in the same place, have the meaning also of “ the powerful energy which communicates” the gifts. But when he comes to the conclusion of the passage, his exposition takes this turn: “ all these gifts and powers, distributed as they are to different persons in different degrees, are communicated by the Supreme Being according to His own good pleasure:”—thus making that Spirit which St. Paul, with repeated, minute, and marked precision, affirms to be one and the self-same, to be at least three different things, inspiration,—the channel of the gifts,—a powerful energy communicating them, and the Supreme Being. The futility of his attempt is manifest: and when the inevitable force and distinctness of the apostle’s words oblige him, after every possible turn and equivocation of meaning, to paraphrase “ that one and the self-same

spirit," by "the Supreme Being," he yields decisive evidence of the truth of our argument for the personality of that Spirit.

Nay more: this writer is so carelessly contradictory to himself, that while in his text he gives a strictly personal sense to the words "as He will," applying them to the Supreme Being; he contends in a note upon them, that they are nothing more than a personification: that is to say, that in this identical place, they are, and are not, to be taken in a personal sense. Yet this is a moderated example of the trifling and self-contradiction, to which the hypothesis of the impersonality of the Holy Spirit reduces its patrons.

But again: in those places where our blessed Lord gives more particular information concerning the Holy Spirit, than is to be found elsewhere in Scripture, He takes very observable care to mark His personality. I shall be readily understood by all, who are in any degree acquainted with the most familiar grammatical terms, when I premise, that in the original language of the New Testament, the words

corresponding to Spirit, Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, are in the neuter gender. Now our Lord says, “The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

“Comforter” is strictly a personal term of the masculine gender; and no word can be substituted for it, which will permit even an ambiguous insinuation of impersonality. The Comforter our Lord explains to be that Spirit which is pre-eminently called THE Spirit The Holy: and He does not say, “The Comforter, the Holy Ghost, which the Father will send in my name, shall teach you,”—which would have been sufficiently decisive as to His personality; nor, “It,” or “that thing, shall teach you,”—which He might have said, if it was an impersonal spirit He intended: but,—“He—shall teach you;” emphatically using the word “He” in the masculine gender, in concord with the strictly personal term Comforter: a mode of expression which prevents, and doubtless

^o John xiv. 26.

was meant by Him who used it to prevent, the possibility of the Comforter or the Holy Ghost being here taken in an impersonal sense. For it is as if He had said, “The Comforter, by whom I mean the Holy Ghost which the Father will send in my name, HE,—that person, the Comforter,—shall teach you all things.”

Again : “When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, HE”—that person, the Comforter,—“ shall testify of me^p. ” And with still greater particularity and care : “When HE,”—when that person,—“the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all the truth : for He shall not speak of Himself ; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will shew you things to come : HE”—that person—“ shall glorify me, for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you^q. ”

And St. Paul, in a passage we have above examined, uses, as I have intimated, a similar mode of expression ; where the

^p John xv. 26.

^q Ibid. xvi. 13.

authorized translation reads it, “ even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God ;” but where it should be, “ even so the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God.”

It will be desirable now to retrace the course of our argument. We have seen that personal operations and properties are attributed to the Holy Ghost : that the objection which alleges that things contrary to the nature of a person are ascribed to Him, is unfounded : that even if it were not, the objection would be of no force ; inasmuch as the impersonal characters ascribed, are figurative on the supposition either of His personality or impersonality, and may be as justly interpreted in accordance with the former as with the latter : that the places ascribing personal operations and properties to Him, are to be taken in their ordinary and personal sense : that they cannot be taken impersonally : that our blessed Lord uses very observable care to mark His personality : and that the personal operations and properties in ques-

tion, are ascribed to Him distinctly from the Father and the Son. We have therefore the most clear and certain evidence that the Holy Ghost both is a person ; and, as a person, is distinct from the Father and from the Son.

But again : our Lord Jesus Christ, in His latest commission to the Apostles, directed them to baptize in the name of the Holy Ghost ; saying, “ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” On which place, a late venerable prelate of our Church justly observes : “ The term for name, both in the Old Testament and in the New, is peculiarly expressive of person, as in Rev. xi. 13. ‘ And in the earthquake were slain names of men seven thousand.’ Rev. iii. 4. ‘ Thou hast a few names in Sardes.’ Acts i. 15. ‘ The number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty.’ So to believe in the name of the Son of God, is to believe in the Son of God. Of which use of the word name for person

^{*} Matthew xxviii. 19.

abundance of examples may be seen in both Testaments. To be baptized, therefore, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is to be baptized in the belief of Three Persons.”

The Holy Ghost being thus proved to be a person distinct from the Father and the Son; our attention is next required to the evidence of His Godhead.

St. Paul, then, in a passage which we have cited in proof of the personality of the Holy Spirit, ascribes to Him the exercise of supreme and unlimited will; saying, “To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally

^t Tracts on the Divinity of Christ, by Bishop Burgess. Lond. 1820, pp. 47, 48.

as he will^u.” And in another text, also cited for the same purpose, the Holy Spirit is shewn to possess infinite knowledge. “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God:”—and, “the things of God knoweth no one, but the Spirit of God^x.”

These two things,—namely, the exercise of supreme unlimited will, and the possession of infinite knowledge,—would be sufficient of themselves, if we had no other evidence, to prove the true Godhead of the Holy Ghost. No intelligence in heaven or earth can blamelessly do his own will, but the Supreme Creator. The highest archangels are continually engaged in ministering to His will; and the devotion with which it is performed by all the hosts of heaven, is set forth by our Saviour in the Lord’s Prayer, for a perpetual example to His people on earth. That Holy Spirit, therefore, who in the word of truth, which gives all glory to God and commands it to be withheld from every creature, says of Himself by the Apostle, that He divideth

^u 1 Cor. xii. 8—11.

^x 1 Cor. ii. 10, 11.

His gifts to every man severally as He will, is to be adored as the Supreme Creator. And the possession of infinite knowledge being peculiar to God; the true Godhead of the Holy Ghost is demonstrated by His possession of such knowledge.

Nor must it be forgotten, that when the Spirit of God affirms that He divides to every man severally as He will, the gifts of the word of wisdom, of knowledge, and of those other things mentioned by St. Paul ; He represents Himself as the source and fountain of those gifts ;" and thus that He is that " Father of lights," from whom " cometh down every good and every perfect gift," and " with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

His distinguishing title, the Holy Ghost, is a testimony of the same force and purport. Many of the creatures, indeed, are called holy; as there are holy things, holy men, and holy angels: but they are holy in a secondary sense, whereas He is the author and efficient cause of their holiness.

There is also a passage, where, in the

¹ Jas. i. 17.

opinion of some interpreters, He is called “the Eternal Spirit,” through which “Christ offered Himself without spot to God^z:” but it is not certain whether the Holy Spirit—the Third Person of the Trinity, or the Divine nature of Christ, is intended by this expression. In either case, however, it is a strong testimony of our doctrine: as on the one interpretation, the Son; or on the other, the Holy Spirit; is affirmed to be eternal. There is not, indeed, any necessity for insisting on the application of the terms “Eternal Spirit” in this passage, to the Holy Ghost: for though no other place in the New Testament directly applies to Him the epithet “eternal;” yet His eternity is a direct conclusion from His title, as pre-eminently and exclusively THE Spirit of God. For as St. Paul shews that there is an essential relation between God and the Spirit of God, similar to that which subsists between a man and man’s spirit “which is in him;” and as God is therefore not to be conceived as at any time, from eternity to eternity,

^z Heb. ix. 14.

without His Spirit: that Spirit is by direct consequence eternal.

Another proof of His Godhead, and of His personality at the same time, is contained in those words of Christ: “ all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” “ By which words,” says Bishop Pearson, in his exposition of the Apostles’ Creed^b, “ it appeareth there is a sin or blasphemy against the Holy Ghost distinct from all other sins and blasphemies committed against God the Father or the Son of God; that this sin hath an aggravation added unto it, beyond other sins and blasphemies: but if the Holy Spirit were no person, the sin could not be distinct from those sins which are committed against Him whose Spirit He is; and if He

^a Matt. xii, 31, 32.

^b Article VIII.

were a person created, the sin could receive no such aggravation beyond other sins and blasphemies.

“ To this,” he continues, the Socinians answer, That the sin against the Holy Ghost is not therefore unpardonable, because He is God, which is not to our purpose; but they do not, cannot, shew that it can be unpardonable if He were not God. It is not therefore simply, and for no other reason, unpardonable, because that person is God against whom it is committed; for if so, then any sin committed against any person which is God, would be unpardonable; which is false. But that sin, which is particularly called blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, is a sin against God, and in such a manner aggravated, as makes it irremissible; of which aggravation it were uncapable, if the Spirit were not God.”

And again: where St. Paul asks the Corinthians, “ Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you^c? ” he has, by immediate and neces-

^c 1 Cor. vi. 19.

sary implication, both ascribed to Him the right to be worshipped by Christians, and affirmed that He is God. For the temple of any one is the house dedicated to his religious worship and service: and therefore, by saying that Christians are the temple of the Holy Ghost, the apostle necessarily and immediately implies, that they are dedicated to His religious worship and service: which, we may observe, is a sufficient and compendious answer to those who challenge us to produce a Scriptural warrant for our worship of the Holy Ghost; as if every proof of His divine attributes and nature did not contain this warrant. The dedication of Christians to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, which takes place when we are baptized “unto the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” gives Him a special right to our worship; and would have been neither enjoined nor permitted, but upon the ground of His having, what, for the sake of distinction, we shall call, a general right to our worship,—namely, as the possessor of eternal power and Godhead.

But in two parallel passages, compared with this, the Holy Spirit is called God, the living God: and in other places also, He is called directly or indirectly, God, and Lord, or, in the language of the Old Testament, Jehovah, and the Lord of hosts.

“ Know ye not,” asks St. Paul, in the place above quoted, “ that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?” and again in other places: “ Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you^d?”—“ For ye are the temple of the living God ; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people^e. ” The Holy Ghost, then, being in Christians, and dwelling in them ; their body becomes His temple, the temple of God : and thus, unless Christians can be the temple of two gods, God, whose temple they are, is affirmed by the apostle to be the Holy Ghost ; and the Holy Ghost, whose temple they are, is affirmed by him to be God, the living God ; who, in the context of the

^d 1 Cor. iii. 16.

^e 2 Cor. vi. 16.

place quoted by St. Paul out of the Old Testament, where He promises that He will dwell in us, and walk in us, and He will be our God, and we shall be His people, also calls Himself the **LORD** our God^f."

The same apostle, in another passage to the Corinthians, refers to that part of the book of Exodus, where it is related, that " till Moses had done speaking with the children of Israel, he put a veil on his face : but when Moses went in before the **LORD** to speak with Him, he took the veil off until he came out^g." And St. Paul accommodates and applies it in this manner : " even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon" the " heart" of Israel. " Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away :" where it is undeniably that the Lord, spoken of by the apostle, is the Lord, Jehovah, spoken of by the prophet. But the apostle adds : " Now the Lord is that Spirit," or, as it is in the original, " the Lord is **THE** Spirit^h." And thus again, St.

^f Levit. xxvi. 11—13.

^g Exod. xxxiv. 33, 34.

^h 2 Cor. iii. 15—17.

Paul testifies that the Spirit is the Lord, Jehovah.

When, moreover, “a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife,” had “sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles’ feet:—Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?—Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” And when the wife of Ananias “came in,—Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?”

Now every lie is a lie unto God: and most lies have also the distinctive character, as this had, of being lies unto men; for the fraud of Ananias was intended to overreach them. But the power of the Holy Ghost so abundantly rested on the apostles, and He was so publicly and fully demonstrated to be present with them, that the sin of Ananias had the yet further distinction of being a lie to Him. It was

ⁱ Acts v. 1—9.

therefore, in common with all lies, a lie unto God; in common with most, a lie unto men; and specifically by itself, a lie unto the Holy Ghost. But to lie to any, necessarily implies the ability to perceive and understand, that is to say, personality, in the individual or individuals who may be the object of this offence: and therefore the Holy Ghost to whom Ananias lied, was not an impersonal gift, an influence, energy, operation, or power, but a person. The guilt of Ananias in lying to the Holy Ghost, infinitely outweighed his offence against men, insomuch that the apostle put the latter wholly out of consideration; specifically charged Ananias and his wife with lying to the Holy Ghost, and tempting the Spirit of the Lord; and even said that he had not lied unto men: meaning that he had not lied unto men only; and that his offence towards them constituted so small a portion of his guilt, that in comparison it was as nothing.

The distinguishing features, then, of the crime, and that in which its special enormity consisted, was, that it was a lie to

the Holy Ghost, a tempting of the Spirit of the Lord. But St. Peter, in distinguishing and explaining this enormity, assured Ananias, that his lie to the Holy Ghost, who was in and with the apostles, was a lie not unto men, but unto God ; that is to say, that the Holy Ghost is not man, ignorant of his deceit, but the all-seeing, and heart-searching God.

Thus, therefore, St. Peter shewed that the Holy Ghost is a person, and affirmed that He is God : and the awful deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, which respectively followed the apostle's remonstrance with each, as they separately entered at different times, must be considered as a signal vindication of that personality and God-head.

And lastly, when in an interview of St. Paul with the Jews at Rome, “ some believed the things which were spoken” by him, “ and some believed not ;” the apostle thus admonished them : “ Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not

understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them^k.” But He whom St. Paul here calls the Holy Ghost, is called by Isaiah, “the King, the Lord of hosts:” that Lord, before whom the seraphims “cried one unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!”

A better guide for our worship can neither be desired nor obtained: and “therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, let us laud and magnify His glorious name, evermore praising” Him with the Father and the Son, “and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: glory be to thee, O Lord most High.”

^k Acts xxviii. 24—27.

^l Isa. vi. 2, 3, 5, 9, 10.

S E R M O N VIII.

M A R K xvi. 15, 16.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

HAVING completed our review of the evidence on which the doctrine of the Trinity is established: it now remains for us to bring together the several conclusions from the whole; to justify their correctness; and to vindicate the manner in which our Church expresses them, and more particularly the importance which she attaches to the doctrine in which they are embodied, in the Athanasian Creed.

Interpreting the Scriptures, then, by the ordinary rules of language, we find that our Lord Jesus Christ is set forth in them

as the Creator^a, the Preserver and supreme Ruler^b, and the righteous Judge of the world^c:—that when He was on earth, He accepted the worship of men^d; that He is worshipped by angels in heaven; and that He shall be worshipped by every creature^e:—that He is to be honoured even as the Father^f:—that He wrought His miracles by His own power, on His own authority, and at His own will^g:—that He is every where present^h:—that His knowledge is infiniteⁱ:—that He is immutable and eternal^k:—that He is named by a great variety of titles which are compatible with the Divine Majesty alone^l:—that He is also the only-begotten Son of God, of one substance with the Father^m:—that He is Himself Godⁿ; God with us^o; our God and Saviour^p; the God of Abraham^q, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob^r; the God of the fathers of the children of Israel^s; the true God^t, who is over all

^a Page 190. ^b p. 197. ^c p. 229. ^d p. 173. ^e p. 178.
^f p. 241. ^g p. 180. ^h p. 197. ⁱ p. 199. ^k p. 219.
^l p. 223. ^m p. 232. ⁿ p. 126, &c. 265, &c. ^o p. 277.
^p p. 279. ^q p. 130. ^r p. 131. ^s p. 132. ^t p. 280.

blessed for ever^u, and whose throne is for ever and ever^x:—that He is the Lord of David^y, and the fellow of the Lord of hosts^z:—that He is Jehovah^a, the Lord, and the Lord of hosts^b:—that He is Lord and God^c; the Lord God^d; the Lord God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob^e; the Lord God of the fathers of the children of Israel^f; the Lord God of Israel^g; the Lord God of hosts^h; and the Lord our Godⁱ.

We have also seen, that the Holy Spirit is a person distinct from the Father and the Son^k:—that He is eminently and absolutely The Spirit of God^l:—that He is omnipresent^m, omniscientⁿ, and eternal^o:—that He is the author and giver of spiritual gifts^p:—that He exercises supreme and unlimited will^q:—that He is the Rock of Israel^r:—that He, as God, makes our bodies His temple, and claims our worship^s:—that He is Creator of the world^t:—

^u p. 280. ^x p. 147. ^y p. 147. ^z p. 145. ^a p. 127, 130, 131, 138, 143, 145, 280. ^b p. 136. ^c p. 280.

^d p. 141. ^e p. 131. ^f p. 133. ^g p. 280. ^h p. 130.

ⁱ p. 135. ^k p. 151, 284, &c. ^l p. 290. ^m p. 154. ⁿ p. 309.

^o p. 311. ^p p. 168, 310. ^q p. 308. ^r p. 154. ^s p. 313.

^t p. 154.

that He is God^u; the God of Israel^x; our God^y; the living God^z:—that He is the Lord, Jehovah^a; the King, the Lord of hosts^b; the Lord God^c; and the Lord our God^d.

But here our opponents will object: first; that there are some passages of Scripture, which, according to the very rules of interpretation we have followed, are opposed to our conclusions of the supreme Godhead of our Saviour: and secondly; that the first Christians, who were instructed by the apostles themselves and by their nearest successors, and who had thus the best means of knowing the intention of the sacred writers, did not believe the doctrine of the Trinity; and that, consequently, from the writings neither of the apostles, nor of the other sacred penmen, who were possessed with the same sentiments, is that doctrine to be legitimately drawn.

Let us then examine those passages of

^u p. 312, 315, 317. ^x p. 154. ^y p. 316. ^z p. 315.
^a p. 316. ^b p. 319. ^c p. 155. ^d p. 316.

Scripture, which are thought to be opposed to our conclusions.

“ My Father,” said our blessed Saviour, “ is greater than I^e:” “ The Son can do nothing of Himself^f:” and; “ to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give^g. ” St. Paul also writes: “ Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father: ” and; “ then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all^h. ” There are a very few more passages of this description: but it is not necessary to produce them here; as the observations which I shall make on those now brought forward, will, in substance, serve also for the rest. Almost all, indeed, that I have to observe respecting them, has been anticipated in the previous Lectures: and I would hope that little will now be thought necessary to shew, that such texts as these, instead of being overlooked in the doctrine of the Trinity, are carefully regarded in it;

^e John xiv. 28.

^f Ibid. v. 19.

^g Matt. xx. 23.

^h 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

—that instead of being at variance with the Catholic doctrine, they are to be numbered among its collateral and subordinate proofs.

All the passages which are to be classed under the present head, are at once explained; some by a reference to the manhood of Christ; and others, by His subordination as the Son. The first passage which I have now cited, is, with its context, as follows: “Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again to you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I.” He speaks of Himself in that respect in which He went away and was to come again: that is to say, in His human or His mediatorial character; “touching” which, as the Athanasian Creed expresses it, He is “inferior to the Father.” And this inferiority is as reconcileable with His equality to the Father, and in the same way, as we have before shewn that His ignorance of the day of judgment is with His omniscience: He being in respect of His man-

hood inferior, while, in respect of His Divine nature, He is equal, to the Father.

There is, however, another sense in which the passage before us may apply to Him: He is inferior to the Father, inasmuch as He is the Son. But this inferiority, instead of opposing, is essentially connected with, His true Godhead, and thus with His equality to the Father. For identity of nature, and in this, perfect equality, are as necessary to the relation of father and son, as that relation clearly gives the priority of order to the father: so that He, who, in the true and proper sense of the word, is the Son of God, “very God of very God,” though second in order, is of the same nature or essence with the Father: and that nature or essence being incapable of division, the Father and the Son are both one, and coequal together. But when we say, second in order, let it be most carefully remembered, that it is in the order of relation alone. He that is truly God, can have none before Him in time, none superior in nature or in power. Whereas,

if one of the Divine Persons were not second, He could not be the Son, but would be unoriginate and unbegotten: the mutual relation, and the unity of nature which that relation involves, would not exist: and thus instead of one God, they would be two Gods; instead of one Father, two Fathers.

Further: that “the Son can do nothing of Himself,” is a truth, which, understood as He intended it, fully coincides with our doctrine. The passage at length is: “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise,” or, “these the Son also doeth likewise.” The proposition, therefore, that “the Son can do nothing of Himself,” is to be taken, not absolutely, but in this qualified sense:—that there is so distinct a subordination on His part as the Son to the Father, so full an acquiescence of the Father in the Son, and so perfect an identity in their mutual power; that the Son can do nothing of Himself, nothing separately from the Father, but doeth all

things whatsoever the Father Himself doeth. And if the Son doeth all things whatsoever the Father Himself doeth, the Father does nothing more than the Son ; whereas if the Son could do any thing of Himself, He would do more than the Father, or act in opposition to Him.

Nor is it more inconsistent with our faith, that our blessed Saviour said, “ To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give :” for though the authorized translation appears to complete in these words the sense of the passage, as far as it is applicable to the present subject, by representing Him as going on to say, “ but it shall be given to them of whom it is prepared of my Father :” it must be acknowledged, that this is one of the comparatively few places, in which that translation, unrivalled as it is in our own, and perhaps in every other language, is susceptible of amendment. According to the original, the passage strictly is : “ to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give but to those for whom it is prepared of my Father :” and the inter-

pretation of it depends on the force of the particle translated “but;”—whether we take it in the adversative sense, or as synonymous with “except.” If we take it in the former sense, the passage will be defective, and can be filled up only by conjecture, more or less probable: and to conjecture, however probable, the sound interpreter never willingly or unnecessarily resorts; especially in places like this, where opposing parties may claim an equal right to supply the deficiency in accordance with their own opinions. But if we take the word in the latter sense, which its use in other places fully authorizesⁱ, and commentators generally receive^k, the passage is complete, is independent of conjecture, and is in every way consistent both with our Saviour’s evident intention, and with the information which other parts of Scripture^l afford upon the subject. As there

ⁱ Compare Matt. xvii. 8. with Mark ix. 8: Gal. ii. 16. with Rom. iv. 13: see also 2 Cor. ii. 5: Matt. xii. 4; Luke vi. 4.

^k Even the Unitarian Version has “not mine to give but to those,” &c.

^l Luke xxii. 29, 30. Rev. iii. 21. John xvi. 15. Compare also 1 Cor. xii. 28. with Eph. iv. 8—11.

cannot, therefore, be any just reason to doubt in which sense the word is to be understood; so the passage is to be interpreted as a disclaimer on our Saviour's part, merely of the power of granting to sit on His right hand and on His left to any but to those for whom this distinction was intended by His Father. He thus repudiates the power of conferring the rewards and honours of His kingdom apart from the Father's designs, in compliance with private solicitation, or from temporal motives; while at the same time, He affirms, that those rewards and honours are His to give conjointly with the Father. And after the observations we have before made, it will not be necessary to point out, how fully, on the ground either of His mediatorial character, or of His Divine Sonship, His words, thus simply and truly represented, accord with our doctrine.

Yet, if we were to take the particle rendered “but” in the adversative sense, and were to supply the deficiency in the same way with the authorized translation; even then the passage would be very far

from disagreeing with our doctrine : for it was perfectly true of Christ, as man, that “ to sit on His right hand and on His left was not His to give,” until after His resurrection, when “ all power in heaven and in earth was given unto Him :” while it is equally true, that if He were not God also as well as man, He would not have been able to receive or to exercise that power. Notwithstanding, when He had received “ all power,” it was not His only, to portion out the honours of His kingdom: the exaltation of the Son could not diminish the Father’s prerogatives. But neither was it at any time the Father’s only, to portion out those honours: for “ all things that the Father hath,” said the Son of God, “ are mine^m. ”

Again: when St. Paul says; “ Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father : ” our opponents themselves will acknowledge, that it is the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, of which the apostle speaks ;—that kingdom, in which one of

^m John xvi. 15.

His objects is, to “ put all enemies under His feetⁿ.” When this shall have been effected, and all things shall be subdued unto Him; “ then shall He deliver up the kingdom to God even the Father;” committing His faithful subjects to the Father’s love, and yielding up the disobedient to His immitigable and eternal justice. “ Then shall the Son also Himself” continue, as He ever was, and ever will be, because He is the Son, “ subject unto Him that put all things under Him:” and having accomplished the purposes of His mediatorial kingdom, and presented His people “ holy, and unblameable, and unreproveable^o” to the Father; His office of Mediator will cease; “ the just, made perfect^p,” shall “ see the face of God and live^q;” they shall ever dwell in the immediate presence of the Most High, contemplating and adoring the unveiled glories of His Majesty; and “ God,” for ever reconciled, “ will be all in all.” Nevertheless, we learn, that it is “ the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and

ⁿ Verse 25.^o Col. i. 22.^p Heb. xii. 23.^q Exod. xxxiii. 20.

Saviour Jesus Christ^r” into which His people shall then have entered; and that “ He shall reign for ever and ever^s:” so that, though His reign as Mediator shall be terminated, it will be only by His entering upon or resuming one of still greater glory, which shall have no end.

From the foregoing observations, then, it is, I would hope, evident, that the passages before us, instead of being opposed to our doctrine, are, on the contrary, to be numbered among its collateral and subordinate proofs. For, if one of the Divine Persons were not greater than the other, they could not be father and son; the unity of nature, to which such a relation is essential, would not exist; and, consequently, the doctrine of the Trinity, which is founded on that unity, would be untrue. I say, “ such a relation;” because this expression embraces the relation of the Spirit, as well as of the Son. If, again, the Son could do any thing of Himself, and without the Father, He could do more than the Father, and would therefore be

^r 2 Pet. i. 11.

^s Rev. xi, 15.

superior to Him, instead of being the Son : but as He doeth whatsoever the Father doeth and nothing without Him, He is coequal in power, and one in essence, with the Father. The superiority of the one Person, and the subjection of the other, which is in the relation of father and son, is necessary to their Unity, and, in this, to their essential equality.

Let us now attend to the objection which appeals to the judgment of the first Christians, against our interpretation of the various passages we have adduced in evidence of the doctrine of the Trinity.

I might, indeed, content myself with merely referring by name, to works in which distinguished writers of our Church have treated this branch of the subject, for a triumphant refutation of the objection ; especially to the “*Ante-Nicene Testimonies*” of a late lamented Professor of this University, and to “*the Apostolicity of Trinitarianism*” by one of my learned predecessors in this Lecture : but as the present course of Lectures may fall into the hands of some who may wish to spare

themselves the trouble of such reference, and as it will be most consistent with the plan and object of the Lectures themselves; I shall endeavour to give as brief an abstract as may be, of the views of the primitive Christians on the doctrine of the Trinity. In this endeavour, I shall confine myself, almost wholly, to such evidence as is brought forward in the works alluded to,—which, indeed, is amply sufficient,—in order to facilitate reference, and the farther pursuit of the subject, to those who may be inclined to undertake it^t.

The Canon of the New Testament was

^t In referring to the “Ante-Nicene Testimonies” of Dr. Burton, I shall, for brevity, use the letter C to designate the “Testimonies to the Divinity of Christ,” and the letter T to designate the “Testimonies to the doctrine of the Trinity ;” affixing in each case the number under which the passage referred to is to be found. The edition used of the former work is the 2d, in 1829. Besides the works named above, the theological student ought carefully to read Bishop Bull’s “Defensio Fidei Nicenæ,” and “An Illustration of the method of explaining the New Testament by the early opinions of Jews and Christians concerning Christ, by W. Wilson, B.D. Fellow of St. John’s College, Cambridge. 8vo. Cambridge, 1797.”

closed by the publication of its latest book, about the year of our Lord 96; and from that year, if not twenty or thirty years earlier, our series of testimonies will commence, extending onward to the first Nicene Council in the year 325.

Clement, spoken of by St. Paul, as one of his “fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life^u,” was appointed bishop of Rome, according to some writers about the year of our Lord 61, but according to others not till the year 93^x. In his first epistle to the Corinthians, which Lardner, a Socinian authority, conceives to have been written in the year 96, he says, “Ye have all been humble minded, arrogant in nothing, subjected rather than subjecting, giving rather than receiving, being satisfied with the supplies from God: and diligently attending to His words, ye have embosomed them in your affections, and His sufferings were before your eyes^y. ” It is evident that they are the sufferings of Christ to

^u Phil. iv. 3. ^x The dates throughout will be those given in the Ante-Nicene Testimonies. ^y C. 5. Faber’s Apostol. of Trin. vol. i. p. 151.

which Clement here refers, and yet he calls them the “ sufferings of God.”

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, is said to have conversed with the apostles, and suffered martyrdom at Rome, probably in the year 107. In his genuine epistles, written on his way to the imperial city, he says, that our Lord Jesus Christ “ is beyond all time, eternal, invisible ; who for our sakes became visible ; who was intangible and incapable of suffering ; who for our sakes suffered, and endured in every manner^z.—There is one physician, fleshly and spiritual, made and not made, God incarnate, true life in death, both of Mary and of God, first capable of suffering, and then incapable^a.—Our God Jesus Christ was conceived by Mary, according to the dispensation of God, from the seed indeed of David, but from the Holy Ghost^b.” He says also, that “ God was manifested humanly^c:” and he frequently calls Christ God^d, his God^e, our God^f.

^z C. 21. Faber, i. 149.

^a C. 12. Faber, i. 148.

^b C. 13. Faber, ibid.

^c C. 14.

^d C. 11, 16, 19.

^e C. 18.

^f C. 17, 20, 21.

To the testimony of Ignatius succeeds that of Polycarp, who is reported by Irenæus not only to have been instructed by the apostles, and to have lived with many who had seen Christ, but also to have been appointed to the bishopric of Smyrna by the apostles. In a letter to the Philippians, supposed to have been written soon after the death of Ignatius, he says, that “every thing that hath breath worships Christ^s. ” And when he himself was called to suffer for his stedfastness in the faith, he offered up a most affecting prayer, which concluded with these words: “For this and for every thing I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, together with the eternal and heavenly Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, with whom to thee and the Holy Ghost be glory, both now and for evermore. Amen^h. ”

The Church of Smyrna, also, in a letter addressed to the other Churches, relating the martyrdom of her venerable bishop, thus concludes: “We wish you health, brethren, while you walk according to the Gospel of

^s Chap. ii. ὡς πᾶσα πνοὴ λατρεύει.

^h T. 3. Faber, i. 84.

Jesus Christ, with whom be glory to God both the Father and the Holy Ghostⁱ."

A few years after the death of Ignatius, about the year 126, flourished Aristides, who is said in the Roman martyrology to have "presented to the emperor Hadrian a volume upon the Christian religion, in which he explained our doctrine, and proved in the clearest manner, that Christ Jesus is the only God^k."

Justin Martyr, in his two Apologies and his disputation with Trypho the Jew, which were published at different times, embracing the period perhaps from the year 140 to 162, says, that "Christ was from the beginning, existeth for ever^l, and is substantially God the Son of God^m, begotten before the whole creationⁿ: that He was not a mere man born in the ordinary way of men^o, but became man, was born of a virgin^p, and was spoken of in the Old Testament as God and man^p: that He is the Framer and Creator of the universe^r, the King of glory and Lord of

ⁱ T. 3. ^k C. 329. ^l C. 38. ^m C. 35. ⁿ C. 33.
^o C. 27. ^p C. 35. ^q C. 30. ^r C. 37.

hosts^s: that He is to be worshipped as God^t, and is God^u; and that Christians held no communion with those impious, irreligious, unjust, and lawless persons, who, instead of worshipping Jesus, confessed Him only in name^x.”

After Justin, we find that Tatian, who is said to have been his disciple, called the Holy Spirit, “the minister of God who suffered^y:” and he said, that “they were not talking foolishly, nor relating idle tales, when they declared that God was born in the form of man^z. ”

About the year 170, Athenagoras, referring in an apology for the Christians to the charge of atheism which was brought against them, says; “That we are not atheists has been proved, since we consider the Creator of this universe and the Word, which is of Him, to be God^a. ” “The Son,” he also says, “is the first offspring of the Father, but not as any thing created: for God is from the beginning; and, being an eternal mind, He Himself had within

^s C. 26. ^t C. 25, 29. ^u C. 25, 31, 32. ^x C. 25.
^v C. 39. ^z C. 40. ^{*} C. 41.

Himself the Word, being eternally comprehensive of the Word^a.” Again, discoursing of the Logos, he expresses himself in this manner: “ All things were made by Him and through Him, the Father and the Son being one: and since the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son, by the unity and power of the Spirit, the Son of God is the Mind and Word of God^b.”—“ Who would not then wonder, that we should hear ourselves called atheists, when we profess our belief in God the Father and in God the Son and in the Holy Ghost, shewing both their power in unity and their distinction in order^c? ”

Within six or seven years after Athenagoras, Melito, bishop of Sardes in Asia, composed an Apology for the Christians, in which are these words: “ We are not worshippers of senseless stones, but of the only God, who was before all things, and is above all things: and also of His Christ, who was verily God, the Word, before the

^a Faber, ii. 239.

^b T. 6.

^c Faber, i. 140.

worlds^d.” In another treatise, written against a sect, which held that Christ had only an apparent body, he says: “ To those persons who have any sense, there is no necessity to prove, from the actions performed by Christ after His baptism, that He had a real and not apparent soul and body, a human nature such as ours. For the actions performed by Christ after His baptism, and particularly the miracles, shewed and demonstrated to the world His divinity, which was hidden in the flesh. For He, being at once perfect God and man, has demonstrated His two substances to us; His divinity, by the miracles worked in the three years which followed His baptism; and His humanity, in the thirty years which preceded His baptism: during which period, owing to the imperfection which He had from the flesh, the signs of His divinity were hidden, although He was very God existing before the worlds.”

Five years later, about the year 180, Theophilus bishop of Antioch observed, in an allegorical interpretation of the Mosaic

^d C. 42. Faber, i. 81, 142.

^e C. 43.

account of the creation, that “the three days which preceded the luminaries, are types of the Trinity, of God and His Word and His Wisdom^f;” meaning by Wisdom, as we see in another place, the Holy Ghost.—“We also find God,” he says, “speaking, as if He wished for assistance, ‘Let us make man after our image and likeness.’ But He did not say, ‘Let us make,’ to any other than to His own Word and His own Wisdom.—The angels did not make us, nor form us; nor could angels make ‘the image of God;’ nor any one else, except the Word of the Lord, nor any power which was far removed from the Father of the universe. For God had no need of those to make what He had predetermined with Himself to make, as if He had not His own hands. For there is always present with Him His Word and Wisdom, the Son and Holy Ghost, by whom and in whom He made all things freely and voluntarily; to whom also He speaks, when He says, ‘Let us make man after our image and likeness^g.’”

In a work against heresies about the year 185, Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, affirms, that “the church, although dispersed through the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples the belief in one God, the Father Almighty, who made the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and all things therein; and in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was incarnate for our salvation; and in the Holy Ghost, who proclaimed by the prophets the incarnation, and the coming, and the birth from a virgin, and the suffering, and the resurrection from the dead, and the incarnate ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and His coming from heaven in the glory of the Father,—that to Christ Jesus, our Lord and God and Saviour and King, according to the pleasure of the invisible Father, every knee may bow^h.” In other places he says, that Christ “always coexisted with the Father in times past and from the beginningⁱ;” and “with the Father, is the God of the

^h C. 45.ⁱ C. 48, 57.

living, who spake with Moses, and was revealed to the patriarchs^k：“ He might have come to us in His incorruptible glory, but we could never have borne the greatness of His glory;” and “ from His great love toward His creation, He submitted to be born of a virgin, Himself by Himself uniting man to God^l,” being “ truly man and truly God^m:” to whom “ the Magi offered incense, because He was Godⁿ. ” And “ man,” he says, “ who was created and formed, was made after the image and likeness of the uncreated God ; the Father approving and commanding ; the Son executing and creating ; and the Holy Ghost supplying nourishment and increase^o. ”

We come next to Clement, who “ became president of the Catechetical school of Alexandria about the year 190.” In his Exhortation to the Gentiles, he says : “ The Word therefore, that is, Christ, is the cause of our original being, for He was in God ; and He is also the cause of our well-being ; since this same Word, who

^k C. 62. ^l C. 45. ^m C. 63. ⁿ C. 51. ^o T. 14.

alone is both God and man, hath appeared unto men as the cause of all good things to us : by whom we are instructed in living well, and conducted to eternal life.” Then citing the place in which St. Paul speaks of “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ,” he observes, that “the Word, who also in the beginning gave life when He formed us, as the Creator, hath taught us to live well, appearing as a Teacher, that He might afterwards give us eternal life, as God^r. ”

“He quotes” the place where St. Paul writes: ‘who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;’ “and instead of adding simply as St. Paul does, ‘but made Himself of no reputation,’ or ‘divested Himself,’ he says, ‘but the compassionate God divested Himself^q. ’ ”

“Will you not be persuaded,” he asks, “either by the Lord Himself, or by St. Paul, even when ‘he entreats you for Christ’s sake,’ and taste and see that Christ is God^r? ” He calls Him also “God the

^r C. 69.

^q C. 70.

^r C. 72.

only begotten Son^s, by whom all things were created^t, the unpresuming God and Lord of the world^u, the Almighty God^x, the merciful and just Lord God^y.”

Tertullian, writing about the year 200, gives this caution: “No person must be called God, because none can be believed to be so, except the Supreme.—Say that He is not God at all, if you call Him an inferior God.—I am commanded not to call any one else God; not to make any other God even in speech, not by my tongue any more than by my hand: not to worship any other, or pay any kind of homage, except to that only God, who gives these commands^z. ” But in another place, having “shewn from the Old Testament, that the term God is applied to more persons than to the Father,” he says: “Not that we ever name with our mouth two Gods or two Lords, although the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and each is God;—and if the Father and the Son are to be

^s C. 90.

^t C. page 55.

^u C. 82.

^x C. 85.

^y C. 83.

^z C. 97.

mentioned together, for the sake of distinction we call the Father God, and Jesus Christ Lord: but yet, speaking of Christ simply, I can call Him God, as Paul did, ‘of whom is Christ, who,’ he says, ‘is God over all, blessed for ever^a.’” And writing against Praxeas, who taught that there was only one person in the Godhead, he expresses himself thus: “Praxeas thinks that we cannot believe in one God in any other way, than if we say that the very same person is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; as if one might not be all (if all proceed from one) by unity of substance; and still the mystery of the divine economy be preserved, which divided the Unity into a Trinity, pointing out three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; but three, not in condition, but in order; not in substance, but in form; not in power, but in species; but of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power^b. ”

Hippolytus, of whom it is uncertain whether he was an Italian, or an Arabian

^a C. page 89.

^b T. 30.

bishop, was a disciple of Irenæus, and an instructor of Origen. He wrote probably about the year 220, and suffered martyrdom in one of the subsequent persecutions. In allusion to the well known passage of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he says, "He that is God over all is blessed; and becoming man is God for ever."^c He speaks again of "our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" as "God from heaven^d," who—"having performed in a divine manner through the flesh those things which belong to divinity, proved Himself, by the things which He did in both ways, (divine and humanly,) to be, and to be conceived to be, really, according to true and natural existence, both God who is infinite, and man who is circumscribed: having perfectly the perfect substance of each, together with its own operation, that is, its natural property: from which we know, that their difference always continued according to their nature without any change."^e Again: "He, who is always by nature God, becoming, as He

^c C. page 91.

^d C. page 116.

C. 145.

wished, by His superinfinite power, man without sin, continues to be what He was, with every thing that we conceive of God: and He also continues to be what He was made, with all that we conceive and naturally understand of man: always continuing in each relation without departing from Himself; according to His divine and human operation, keeping perfect in either relation his own naturally unalterable condition^f.” And again: “ Noetus is compelled even against his will to acknowledge the Father God Almighty, and Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who is God, and became man, to whom the Father subjected every thing except Himself and the Holy Ghost, and that these are in this manner three. But if he wishes to know how God is proved to be one, let him understand that His essence is one, and as far as relates to His essence, He is one God; but with respect to the dispensation, His manifestation is threefold^g. ”

About the year 240, Origen, who was a hearer of Hippolytus, and was ap-

^f C. 145.

^g T. 41.

pointed at the age of eighteen to preside in the catechetical school of Alexandria, writes, that “ God truly took our nature upon Him^h;”—and “ although He entered on our poverty, and obscured His own glory, as if rising out of the west, yet His name is the Lord; for though made man, He did not lose being the Lord Godⁱ. ” He also calls Him “ the only begotten God^k—of one substance with the Father^l,—the true God^m,—and our God and Saviourⁿ,—who liveth for ever and without change^o: ” and in a fanciful interpretation of those words, ‘ as the eyes of servants look upon the hand of their masters,’ he says : “ The servants of their masters, the Father and the Son, are the body and spirit ; and the handmaid of her mistress, the Holy Ghost, is the soul ; and the three are the Lord our God ; for the three are one^p. ”

Origen is followed in our series of testimonies by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage in the year 248, who writes : “ We acknowledge that we have offered, and still offer,

^h C. 177. ⁱ C. 231. ^k C. 202. ^l C. 254.

^m C. 214. ⁿ C. 213. ^o C. 220. ^p T. 48.

without ceasing, the greatest thanks to God the Father Almighty, and to His Christ our Lord and God^q;" who "is man and God, formed of each nature, that He might be a mediator between us and the Father."^r Again : "if a person may be baptized by heretics, he may therefore obtain remission of sins. If he obtains remission of sins, he is also sanctified, and made the temple of God. If he is sanctified and made the temple of God, I ask, of what God? If you say, of the Creator, I say that he cannot, because he does not believe in Him. If you say, of Christ, I say that neither can he, who denies Christ to be God, be made the temple of Christ. If you say, of the Holy Ghost, since the three are one, I ask, how can the Holy Ghost be reconciled to Him, who is at enmity either with the Son or the Father^s?"

Novatian, who was condemned indeed as heterodox in matters of ecclesiastical discipline and practice, but was unblamed in his doctrines, is placed in the year 257. In a treatise on the Trinity he thus rea-

^q C. p. 351. ^r C. 286. ^s T. 59.

sons: “ If, when it belongs to no one but to God to know the secrets of the heart, Christ perceives the secrets of the heart ;—if, when it belongs to no one but to God to forgive sins, the same Christ forgives sins ;—if, when it belongs to no man to come down from heaven, He descended by coming down from heaven ;—if, when these can be the words of no human person, ‘ I and the Father are one,’ Christ alone uttered these words from a consciousness of divinity ;—if, lastly, the apostle Thomas, furnished with all the proofs and circumstances of Christ’s divinity, answered to Christ, ‘ My Lord and my God ;’—if the apostle Paul writes in his Epistles, ‘ whose are the Fathers, and of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever ;’—if the same Paul says, that he was ‘ an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ ;’—if the same Paul contend that he learned the Gospel not ‘ of men, nor by man, but by Jesus Christ,’—it follows, that Christ is God.”

From Novatian, our attention is called

to Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, whose testimony may be assigned to the year 260. He speaks of Christ as being “with the Father eternally, without beginning and eternally generated^u, coeternal with the Father who begat Him^x, of one substance with God^y, and by nature God, very God^z, God over all^a, the mighty God^b, the only true God^c; by nature Lord^d, Lord God^e, God and Lord of glory^f, Lord God of the apostles^g, and our Lord God the Lord of hosts^h. ” He also represents Christ as saying, “ I am He that exists personally and for ever, that is equal to the Father in the unalterable nature of the essence, coeternal also with the Spirit which is the Lord, to which when Ananias and Sapphira lied, because they did not lie to men, but to God, they died : for the Paraclete (or Comforter) is God, in the same sense as the Father of Christ, coeternal with Christⁱ. ”

^u C. 302.^x C. pp. 405, and 407.^y C. 305.^z C. 313.^a C. p. 93.^b C. 324.^c C. 314.^d C. 321.^e C. 322.^f C. 321.^g C. 321.^h C. 318.ⁱ T. 69.

Again: Dionysius of Rome, who was contemporary with his namesake of Alexandria, thus speaks: “ We must neither divide the wonderful and divine unity into three Godheads ; nor destroy the dignity and exceeding greatness of the Lord by making Him a creature: but we must believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Christ Jesus His Son, and in the Holy Ghost ; and that the Word is united with the God of the universe: for he says, ‘ I and the Father are one ;’ and, ‘ I am in the Father, and the Father in me :’ for thus both the divine Trinity, and the holy doctrine of the Unity, will be preserved^k. ”

Much attention was at this time directed to the heresy of Paul of Samosata, who in the year 269 was excommunicated by the council of Antioch. With the hope however, as it would appear, of bringing him back to sound doctrine, and thus of avoiding the infliction of so severe a sentence, the council “ addressed a letter to him,” containing “ a summary of their creed, which, they affirm, ‘ had been preserved in

^k T. 71.

the catholic church from the time of the apostles to that day^{1.}" They speak of Christ as " God, not by foreknowledge, but in essence and substance Son of God—God and man—who was predicted in the law and the prophets, and is believed by the whole church under heaven to be God, and to have humbled Himself from having been equal to God, but to have been man, and of the seed of David according to the flesh^{m.}."

Archelaus, bishop of Caschar in Mesopotamia, whose testimony is dated in the year 278, speaking of the signs and wonders which took place at the time of our Saviour's death, says, that they " proclaimed with a loud voice, that He was God^{n.}"

Before the close of the third century, Methodius, bishop of Tyre, who afterwards " suffered martyrdom at Chalcis," says, that " Christ was this, a man filled with unmixed and perfect divinity, and God contained in man^{o.}:" and that " He was born and came down from His Father's throne^{p.}"

¹ C. 325. ^m C. 325. ⁿ C. 328. ^o C. 332. ^p C. 336.

Arnobius, a rhetorician of Sicca in Africa, composed a work against the heathen religions, which is ascribed to the first decade of the fourth century. He asks, “ When Christ is really God, and without the uncertainty of any doubtful matter, do you think we can deny that He is worshipped in the highest degree by us, and called the Guardian of our society? What! some one will say in a violent passion, is that Christ God? Yes, we answer, God, and God in the highest sense¹. ”

The see of Alexandria was at this time filled by Peter, who suffered martyrdom in the year 310, and of whom Eusebius speaks in the highest terms of praise^r. He interprets “ those words of Gabriel to Mary, ‘ The Lord be with thee,’ to mean, God the Word be with thee; for they signify,” he adds, “ that he was conceived in the womb, and became flesh^s. ” And on our Saviour’s question to Judas, “ Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?” he says, that

¹ C. 339.

^r He calls him θεῖον ἐπισχόπων χρῆμα.

^s C. 346.

“ this and similar passages, and all the miracles which He did, and His powerful works, prove Him to be God who became man : both together therefore prove that by nature He was God, and by nature was made man^t. ”

These testimonies are but a slight specimen of many more, which will be found in the works from which I have taken them ; but I trust that they are amply sufficient to shew the falsehood of the objection, which alleges that the doctrine of the Trinity was not believed by the early Christians ; and to authorize the most decided contradiction of the assertion, that the Scriptures, as interpreted by those who had the best opportunities of knowing the meaning of the sacred writers, do not contain that doctrine.

We may observe, in brief confirmation of these testimonies, that the worship of our Saviour as God, by the Christians from the very earliest period, is attested in the objections of both Jews and Heathens ;—objections, which the Christians never met

^t C. 347.

by a denial, but, as we have seen in some of those testimonies, by a vindication of their worship; and that whenever any professed Christians put forth doctrines opposed either to the Godhead, or to the distinct personality of Christ, they were at once publicly and solemnly cast out of the Church.

Nor must we forget to add, that the belief of the first Christians in the doctrine of the Trinity, is, of itself, no inconsiderable evidence of its truth. For this doctrine was not the fanciful speculation of one or two individuals; but we learn from the fact, that the writers from whom the preceding testimonies are taken, were among the most distinguished members and bishops of the Church, who—with two exceptions, indeed, which yet do not affect the present argument—continuing in its communion, must be understood as expressing its doctrines on all essential points;—from the objections also of enemies, from the defences or “*Apologies*” of the Christians themselves, from their public letters, liturgies, creeds, and con-

troversial works^u; that it was the doctrine of the universal church: and from the Nicene Council, it was constantly and universally traced back to the teaching of the holy Apostles:—a claim, which, under all the circumstances, and unrefuted as it was by those who were most concerned to refute it, must be acknowledged to be valid, and therefore decisive that the doctrine is true.

Having thus justified, as I would hope, the correctness of the conclusions, which we have drawn from the various passages of Scripture, adduced in proof of the doctrine of the Trinity; we may now be permitted to attempt a vindication of the manner in which those conclusions are expressed by our Church, and of the importance which she attaches to the doctrine in which they are embodied, in the Athanasian Creed.

The necessity of creeds in general, we are not called on, neither indeed can it

^u Mr. Faber's work presents the evidence to be drawn from these different sources, in a very clear and satisfactory point of view.

be requisite, to defend. Every society, of whatever nature, however limited or extensive, must have its common principles and laws, whether traditional or written, varying or fixed; whether imposed by authority, or adopted by common consent. The question, therefore, of creeds, is one of degree only; that is, what shall be their nature, extent, and application: and these are to be determined by the reasons which render the creeds themselves necessary; namely, the union of those who are within the Church; their protection against its enemies; and the manifestation to the world of the light with which it has been entrusted. For these purposes, a creed, it is evident, ought to embrace—I will not say all essential points, for a complete catalogue of these it would be perhaps impossible to make;—but those articles, which are, at the same time, distinguishing and fundamental, as well as essential. And it is plain also, that such articles are to be expressed in terms, both adequate, and affording the least possible room for equivocation.

No creed, it is true, however worded, can exclude the dishonest and disingenuous : but to assert that creeds are therefore useless, were even more foolish, than to say, that because no precautions can positively secure us against the daring robber, we ought therefore to throw open our doors to all who may desire to make free with our persons or property. Because we cannot do all, it does not follow that we are to do nothing. And though it may be said, that the dishonest and disingenuous are the very persons whom a creed ought to exclude ;—it is, indeed, the Church's part, first, to use every precaution which she has in her power, and then, to commit the overruling of the evil which she cannot prevent, to Him who will make all things work together for her good :—but it should not be forgotten, that the mistaken though ingenuous man is often, even with the best intentions, much more dangerous to the peace and faith and objects of the Christian church, than its wilful enemies, secret or avowed.

Now, that the doctrines contained in the

Athanasian Creed, are distinguishing, and are expressed in terms which make equivocation as difficult as words can make it, instead of requiring proof, is even a subject of complaint with the opponents of the Creed. The questions, therefore, to be considered, are; whether the doctrines contained in it are expressed in proper and adequate terms, and are fundamental:—because if fundamental, they must be essential also:—in other words, whether the Athanasian Creed expresses the doctrine of the Trinity in adequate terms; and whether the belief of that doctrine is necessary to salvation.

In what terms, then, is the doctrine of the Trinity set forth in the Athanasian Creed?—

“The Catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.”—

This is the general enunciation of the doctrine; conveying in as few and comprehensive words as language can afford, those truths of Scripture:—that there is one only God; and that the three Persons,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are each God. That the terms, therefore, are adequate, cannot be denied: or if any would yet contend that they are either inadequate or unintelligible; the deficiency is supplied, and explanation is given, in the following versicles.

When, however, we refer to these versicles, we are informed, on the other hand, that they abound in niceties of explication, and are altogether unnecessary! But that they are not unnecessary, a brief review of them will evince.

To the general statement of the doctrine, the equally general caution is annexed: “neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance;” and the twenty-two succeeding versicles present a detailed and reiterated proof of this caution. It is usually said to be directed, the former part of it against the Sabellians, the latter against the Arians: but it embraces, in one comprehensive grasp, every form of error which has been, or indeed can be, imagined against the doctrine of the Trinity: for every error respecting this

doctrine must, directly or indirectly, confound the Persons or divide the Substance ; and, therefore, as long as man is liable to error, so long will this caution be necessary. And if the caution itself be necessary, it cannot be superfluous to illustrate and enforce it by the proofs and reasons on which it is founded. They are brought forward in the Creed in no other form than that of proofs ; and, consequently, no man's conscience need be offended by them, unless,—in opposition to Scripture from which they are, some of them, immediate quotations, and others, as we have seen, necessary and well-authorized deductions, —he believes them to be untrue^x.

Passing over the twenty-seventh and the twenty-eighth versicles, which will come under another head ; we arrive at that part of the Creed, in which “ the right faith” concerning “ the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ” is set forth.

Various are the errors which have been

* Let any one of these places be denied, and immediately the Persons are confounded, or the Substance divided.

propagated on this subject. By some, as the Cerinthians, Ebionites, Paulianists, Arians, Photinians, and Macedonians; the perfect Godhead of our Saviour; by others, His perfect manhood; was denied.

The Patripassians, followers of Praxeas and Noetus, held, that the Father Himself descended into the Virgin, and suffered on the cross for us: while the Sabellians, to avoid the charge of Patripassianism, taught that the Son was not the Father personally, but an energy, unsubstantial emanation, or a certain portion of the divine nature, united to man. The Docetæ or Phantasiastæ taught that His body was only an appearance or apparition, not real and substantial. The Arians and Apollinarians divided man into body, animal soul, and mind or intellect,—*σῶμα, ψυχὴ, νοῦς*: and the former held that Christ had nothing of man but the body, in which the place of the animal soul and the intellect was supplied by the Logos or Word, whom they maintained to be a created Spirit: while the Apollinarians taught that Christ had both the body and the animal soul of

man, which two He yet brought down from heaven ; that His body was not real, composed of flesh and blood, but uncreated and heavenly ; and that the only begotten, whose Godhead they maintained against the Arians, supplied the place of the human mind : and both Arians and Apollinarians, with the Eutychians,—who indeed confessed two distinct natures originally in Christ,—taught a coagulation, commixture, or absorption of the one nature in or into the other ; insomuch that either God became passible, or Christ suffered only in appearance. And, lastly, the Nestorians maintained, that our blessed Saviour was God and man, in two distinct persons, but with one aspect ; that the union between the Son of God with the Son of man took place in the very moment of the Virgin's conception, and was never to cease ; and that this union was not one either of nature or of person, but only of will and affection.

Against these various and destructive forms of heresy, the part of the Creed before us was directed : and whosoever

will take the trouble of comparing it in detail with the sketch which I have given above, will see how directly and fully it confronts each different heresy, and therein also, it may be asserted, every possible form which heresy can assume respecting the person of Christ. That the statements of this part of the Creed, therefore, were originally needful, must be concluded: and that they are far from being superfluous now, will be evident to all adherents of the right faith, who remember the progress of their own opinions, or have much acquaintance with the progress and state of opinions in others, on this most important subject.

But even if it could be truly said, that none of the errors, against which the statements of the present, and the proofs of the former, part of the Creed were directed, are now entertained; it would not therefore follow, that those statements or proofs ought to be set aside: for who can presume to say, how much of that freedom from error might not be owing directly to them? Nor do I conceive, that it is going

one degree farther, than the unanimous verdict of those, who are most competent to judge on the subject, will fully authorize me, to assert, that the perfect soundness of faith respecting the doctrine of the Trinity and “the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ,” for which the individual members of our Church have been and are generally so conspicuous, is, under God, mainly to be attributed to these very parts of the Athanasian Creed. It must be confessed, that the correction of error is necessary; but the prevention of it cannot be less necessary, and is still better.

The inquiry yet remains:—is the doctrine of the Trinity fundamental? and is the belief of it necessary to salvation? Here, however, I must observe, that, strange as it may be thought, our only opponents on this head are persons who either profess to believe the doctrine, or regard all Christian doctrines with indifference. Even Priestley himself acknowledged^y, that “if the doctrine be true, it is no doubt in the highest degree important

^y Letters to Bishop Horsley, p. 92.

and interesting.” And how, indeed, can we, after due reflection, otherwise think? For as, were the doctrine false, it would be in the highest degree blasphemous, as degrading the Creator to a parity with His creatures; and idolatrous also, as teaching us to worship the creature equally with the Creator: so, on the other hand, if the doctrine be true,—if the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God,—it cannot be otherwise than highly offensive to the Almighty Father, ungrateful for His inestimable love in our redemption by His own Son, and sacrilegious towards that beneficent Spirit who has promised to dwell in us and walk in us, to make our bodies His temple, and to be our God;—if we withhold from any of the Divine Persons, the honour to which they are thus entitled, the confession and the worship of their Majesty.

We might, indeed, bring forward a powerful array of testimonies from Scripture to prove, that faith in the holy and undivided Trinity is generally necessary

to salvation: but the text of the present discourse will, I think, be sufficient. “ Go ye into all the world,” said our blessed Saviour to His apostles, “ and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned:” that is to say, He that believeth the Gospel, when it is declared unto him, and is baptized in or into the belief of it, shall be saved; but he that believeth it not when so declared unto him, shall be damned. What then is the Gospel, or what are its fundamental doctrines? Truly this is the sum and substance, the very pith and marrow, of the Gospel:—that God the Father is reconciled unto us, that God the Son has atoned for us, that God the Holy Ghost doth sanctify us: but if we take away the Divine power from that reconciliation, that atonement, that sanctification; it must be seen, that they are at once deprived of all efficacy and value. If any doctrine of the Gospel, therefore, can be necessary; it is that of

the Divine power and Majesty of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Moreover, it is in their belief and into their undivided name that we are baptized. It is in the profession of faith in the Holy Trinity that we are made Christians, and admitted into the covenant of salvation. But assuredly, if we keep not the faith on which we were admitted into that covenant, we cannot look for its rewards. If we “have made shipwreck of our faith,” we have lost also “the anchor of our souls.”

But, finally, it will be said: “admitting the justness and force of these arguments; it is obvious that they apply to the case of those alone, who have been sufficiently instructed in the Gospel: and how then, it will be asked, can it be right to say, ‘Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith: which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastinglly?’ The responsibilities of those, who from want

of opportunity, from incapacity, or from other involuntary or venial causes, have not been instructed in the Gospel, are very different from those which lie on such as have enjoyed that advantage. Some qualification therefore is needed in these ‘damnatory clauses.’”

To this phrase of “damnatory clauses,” may in a great measure be imputed the influence which the objection has on the greater part of those who entertain it. Some enemy, knowing the effect of an ill name, or some unreflecting friend, has, in an evil hour, thus denominated these versicles. Yet they are not damnatory, for they condemn no man’s person: but they are “monitory,” inasmuch as they place before him the faithful and at the same time charitable admonition, that if he do not—keep—the Catholic faith, he shall perish.

But respecting the clauses themselves, it escapes the notice of the objector, that they actually contain the very qualification which he requires. “Whosoever,” says the Creed, “will” or “desires to be saved, before all things it is necessary that he

hold the Catholic faith :”—this, indeed, is not strictly the part objected to ; but we may observe, that it is precisely what our text, and many other passages of Scripture declare, and is to be interpreted in no respect more rigidly than our Saviour’s words : the obnoxious part is the next versicle, which proceeds :—“ which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastinglly.” Now the connection and relative force of the two places is obviously this : Whosoever desires to be saved, it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith : and if he who has this faith, keeps it not, —for he cannot keep it except he has first had it or held it, as the other versicle expresses it,—he cannot be saved, but without doubt shall perish everlastinglly. The warning, therefore, is directed to him only, who keeps not the faith which he has been taught, which has been put into his hands, which he has had hold of. The very words themselves contain every needful and reasonable qualification, and consequently the objection falls to the ground.

To conclude : the doctrine, which has been the subject of these discourses, teaches us, that the religion we profess, and into which we have been solemnly initiated, is a matter in which we have to do with a Maker, a Redeemer, and a Sanctifier, who are exalted far above all creatures ; who claim our undivided service ; and who, as they have been mighty to create, are also mighty to save to the uttermost. More particularly, it teaches that we are to honour the Son and the Holy Spirit, even as we honour the Father ; and that we are to adore this most sacred Trinity, in the undivided majesty of the Godhead. It manifests the infinite love of Him, “ who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ”—for us. It illustrates the greatness of the salvation

which has been wrought for us ; since in the most wise dispensation of God, such a sacrifice was required in atonement for our souls, as derived its efficacy from a direct and incomprehensible union with the fulness of the Godhead. It teaches us, that, being members of Christ, we are admitted to communion with Him who is the Most Highest over all ; and that our bodies, being, through the habitation of the Spirit, the temples of the living God ; we ought to fly from all impurity, from the lusts of the flesh, and from the devices and desires of our own hearts : that we ought to glorify God, our Maker, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, in our body and in our Spirit, which are His : and that we should ever be on the watch, lest we grieve that most holy and gracious Spirit, by whom we are sealed unto the day of redemption.

N O T E S.

NOTE 1.

Page 2. l. 3. *in all ways and in all kinds of publications.*

In Archbishop Magee's Work on the Atonement, vol. iii. pp. 325—330, 1832; and in the Editor's Preface to Bishop Horsley's Tracts, p. x. Dundee, 1812; some of these ways are referred to. "The Socinian's friend, Mr. Joseph Lancaster," spoken of in the latter, is the founder of "The British and Foreign School Society's" schools.

I have been informed, that public complaint was made within the last three years in the diocese of Norwich, of the Unitarians taking the publications of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and other orthodox publications, out of their covers, and *inserting their own.*

The same undermining spirit is exhibited in many of the popular writings of the day, especially in works professing to convey 'enlightened information' to the people; from the ponderous Cyclopædia of Rees (an avowed Unitarian), down to the "Penny Cyclopædia" of "The Society for Promoting Useful Knowledge."

NOTE 2.

Page 4. l. 22. *the doctrine and the fact.*

Christian doctrines set forth truths, which may be said to consist of facts—things that have been *done*,

or are *now*,—and the causes, objects, consequences, &c. of those facts. Thus in the doctrine of the Atonement: Christ's death is a fact, our redemption the consequence of it, our eternal salvation the object. Again: “He sitteth at the right hand of God,—where He ever liveth—to make intercession—for us.” Or in another view of doctrine; Christ's death is a fact; that he died *for us*, a doctrine.

NOTE 3.

Page 5. line 20. the Unipersonalists themselves being judges.

“ We deny the articles of the New Christianity, or the Athanasian religion, not because they are mysteries, or because we do not comprehend them; we deny them, because we do comprehend them; we have a clear and distinct perception, that they are not mysteries, but contradictions, impossibilities, and pure nonsense.” *Answer to Stillingfleet's Sermon on the Mysteries of the Christian Faith*, p. 4. cited in *Stillingfleet's Vindication of the Doctrine of the Trinity*, ch. i. *Works*, vol. iii. p. 434. fol. Lond. 1710.

“ I do aver in my own name and in that of my Unitarian brethren, that no individual among us rejects the doctrine of the Trinity, or any other doctrine, solely because it is incomprehensible: but we refuse our assent to the doctrine of the Trinity, because, according to some expositions of it, it is a gross and palpable contradiction; and because in every form it is unfounded in reason and unsupported by Scripture.” *Belsham's Bampton Lecturer reproved*, London, 1819, p. 11.

NOTE 4.

Page 18. l. 24. a religion without a god.

Ramohun Roy observed in conversation, that “ what is known ceases to be God.”

NOTE 5.

Page 21. l. 5. *he is obliged in substance to confess, &c.*

“ Secundo dicit (Scotus) non extare locum ullum Scripturæ tam expressum, ut sine Ecclesiæ declaracione evidenter cogat transubstantiationem admittere. Atque id non est omnino improbabile. Nam etiamsi Scriptura, quam nos supra adduximus, videatur nobis clara, ut possit cogere hominem non protervum: tamen an ita sit, merito dubitari potest, cum homines doctissimi, et acutissimi, qualis imprimis Scotus fuit, contrarium sentiant.

Tertio addit Scotus, quia Ecclesia Catholica in generali Concilio Scripturam declaravit, ex Scriptura sic declarata manifeste probari transubstantiationem. Non enim potest non esse verus Scripturæ sensus, quem is tradit, qui Scripturam condidit, idem autem Spiritus Sanctus est, qui et Scripturam dictavit Apostolis et Prophetis, et qui eam per Ecclesiam declaravit.” *Bellarmin. de Eucharistia*, lib. iii. cap. 23.

“ Colligimus conversionem panis in corpus Domini, non esse productivam, nec conservativam, sed adductivam. Nam corpus Domini præexistit ante conversionem, sed non sub speciebus panis. Conversio igitur non facit, ut corpus Christi simpliciter esse incipiat, sed ut incipiat esse sub speciebus panis.” *Ibid. cap. 18.*

“ Sed quidquid de modis loquendi, illud tenendum est, conversionem panis et vini in corpus et sanguinem Christi esse substantialem, sed arcanam et ineffabilem, et nullis naturalibus conversionibus per omnia similem.”

Id. in Precognit. hujus loci.

“ Corpus Christi veraciter esse in Eucharistia ex Evangelio habemus: conversionem vero panis in corpus Christi Evangelium non explicavit, sed expresse ab

Ecclesia accepimus.” *Cajetan. in Thom.* 3. q. 75.

Art. I.

“ Hactenus Matthæus : qui et solus Testamenti Novi meminit. Neque ullum hic verbum positum est, quo probetur, in nostra missa veram fieri carnis et sanguinis Christi præsentiam.” *Io. Fisherus contra Captiv. Babyl.* 810.

“ Porro tunc convenienter institutum fuisse, probatur ex eo, quod Christus in *propria* specie jamjam esset recessurus ab Apostolis: unde conveniebat, ut tunc in sacramentali specie seipsum relinquenter. Deinde quia amicis ab invicem discedentibus maxima solent exhiberi dilectionis signa, quæ etiam magis memoriae commen-datur.” *Theologia Petri Dens*, tom. v. p. 259. Dublin, 1832.

“ Corpus Christi, sub speciebus velatum, est signum sui ipsius in propria specie existentis, v. g. pendentis in Cruce, vel gloriosi in cœlis.” *Ibid.* p. 283.

“ The eating of the flesh and blood of the Son of God is as real in the Holy Communion, as grace, the expiation of sins, and the participation in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, is real and actual in the New Covenant.

“ But still, as he wishes to give our faith an opportunity of exerting itself, and to remove, at the same time, our disgust at eating his body and drinking his blood in their natural form; it was proper for him to give them to us, wrapped up as it were under another appearance. But if these considerations obliged him to make us eat the flesh of our victim otherwise than the Jews had done, he ought not for that purpose to have deprived us of its reality and its substance.” *Bossuet's Exposition*, ch. ix. p. 59. Lond. 1825.

“ — in saying that Jesus Christ is present, we acknowledge that he is not so in a sensible manner.” *Ibid.* ch. x. p. 65.

“ In fact, the body which Christ gave was *by anticipation* his glorified body, which was capable of being in many places at once, and had other qualities which our bodies will also possess when they shall have put on incorruption and immortality. It was the same body as to the *matter*, but different as to the manner: and hence there is no absurdity in the consequence that Christ held his body in his hands.” *Husenbeth’s Defence of the Creed and Discipline of the Catholic Church against the Rev. J. Blanco White’s “ Poor Man’s Preservative against Popery,”* p. 79.

NOTE 6.

Page 23. l. 9. *the word person.*

“ Quod affers de vocabulis Essentiæ et Personarum a nobis repudiatis, quia in sanctis literis non inveniantur, non est admittendum. Nemini enim viro cordato umquam persuadebitis, id, quod per ea vocabula adversarii significare voluerunt, idcirco repudiandum esse, quia ipsa vocabula scripta non inveniuntur. Immo quicumque ex vobis hac ratione sunt usi, suspectam apud nonnullos, alioqui ingenio et eruditione præstantes viros, causam nostram reddidere. Satis est enim apud omnes veritatis amantes, rem ipsam, de quâ quæstio est, rationibus vel testimoniis confirmari. Quamvis vocabula quæ in ipsa quæstione explicanda expressa sunt, diserte scripta non inveniantur. Tametsi enim non aliunde, quam ex verbis sententia elicitor, non tamen eadem sententia diversis verbis explicari nequit, vel ex uno verbo tantum sed plerumque ex aliis multis aut singulis, aut pluribus aperte colligitur. Quare desinamus hæc puerilia et inania atque sophistica consectari, et quæ viris digna et solidissima ac verissima sunt persequamur.” *F. Socinus, Opera, vol. ii. 778.*

NOTE 7.

Page 21. l. 1. *The Romanist*,

—too frequently called, both in conversation and in writing, the *Catholic*. How can Protestants, especially members of our Church, forget, that if the adherents of that Church, which acknowledges the Bishop of Rome for its head, are Catholics, we are not? We have separated from them on the sole ground, that they have departed from the *Catholic faith*, not indeed by a *simple rejection* of *all* its verities, but by *corrupting* it with the addition of contradictory and impious novelties. To call them *Roman Catholics*, is to stultify ourselves by the use of a self-contradictory name; but the name of *Romanist* cannot be offensive to their feelings. But whether it be so or not, truth is not to be sacrificed to any man's feelings. We are the Catholics, and not they: especially in these kingdoms, where *in addition* to their manifold heresies, they are also *schismatics*; having been cut off from us by the presumptuous interference of Pope Pius V and his council; and their heresy being continued amongst us, not by *successors* of the bishops of the Church of England as it was before the Reformation, for they were for a considerable period without *any* bishops,—but by bishops of *foreign* sees, who, whether their sees be real or fictitious, are *absent* from their *proper and formal charge*, and come here the bare creatures and emissaries of the Pope, under the usurped title of “*Vicars Apostolic*.” In these kingdoms, therefore, besides being *not* Catholics, but *Romanists*, they are pre-eminently above *all others* of their communion, *Papists*.

It ought not to be lost sight of, moreover, that the Reformation of the Church of England was begun,

carried on, and completed by *its own rightful authorities*; and that the ministers of the Roman Church in these kingdoms, instead of being, in any way, successors of the clergy of the Church of England, when it was in subjection to the Pope, are, even as the very title of their bishops, “*Vicars Apostolic*,” betrays, mere *intruders*. There is much, as all know, in a name: and we cannot be too careful to call things, more particularly in reference to religion, by their right names; inoffensively if we can; but still, by their right names; and certainly not, as in the vulgar treatment of the name Catholic, by the *suicidal* application of the wrong one.

It will not be going out of my way to add, that in speaking of any of the prelates in Ireland who are subject to the bishop of Rome, by the title of “*the Catholic*,” or “*the Roman Catholic* bishop—*of Cork*” or “*Kildare*,” for instance; we ought properly to call him, “*the Romanist* bishop *at Cork*” or “*in Kildare*,” not “*of Cork*” or “*Kildare*:” and in speaking of any of the prelates of our Church in that kingdom, we ought not to call him “*the Protestant* bishop,” but “*THE* bishop—*of Meath*,” for instance. It is as glaring a solecism in ecclesiastical polity, to speak of two contemporary bishops *of* one see, as it is one in civil polity to speak of two contemporary kings of England. *One* must be a *pretender*.

NOTE 8.

Page 23. l. 14. *one of three individual intelligent agents, existing separately from all other beings, yet not separately, but distinctly, from each other.*

1. *Distinctly from each other*: because the Father is not the Son whom He has begotten, nor the Holy Spirit whom He has sent; neither is the Holy Spirit to be

confounded with the Father and the Son from whom He proceeds. 2. *Yet not separately from each other*: for then each Person would be a separate God. 3. *Separately from all other beings*: because all other beings were created by them and for them; and in, through, and by them, all other beings do consist. 4. *Intelligent agents*: for one is not a name, operation, office, or attribute, of the other; but the bearer of a name, the worker of operations, the sustainer of an office, the possessor of attributes. 5. *Individual intelligent agents*: for each is, in the highest and most perfect degree, possessor of all these attributes, which belong to God. And, 6. *One of three*: because there are none but they, to whom the word person, in this meaning, is applied.

NOTE 9.

Page 24. l. 14. *the connection between words and ideas.*

“ Impartial and sincere inquirers after truth must be particularly upon their guard against what is called the natural signification of words and phrases. The connexion between words and ideas is perfectly arbitrary; so that the natural sense of a word to any person, means nothing more than the sense in which he has been accustomed to understand it. But it is very possible that men who lived two thousand years ago might annex very different ideas to the same words and phrases; so that the sense which appears most foreign to us, might be most natural to them.” *Belsham’s Calm Inquiry*, pp. 5, 6.

In the pursuit of those studies, which enabled Mr. Belsham to enlighten the world with treatises on the “Elements of the doctrine of the Human Mind and of Moral Philosophy,” on “Topics of Metaphysics and Theology,” and on “Logic;” he had recourse, probably,

to the *Index* of “Locke’s^a Essay on the Human Understanding;” in which are these two consecutive references:

“Words

Have no natural signification, l. iii. ch. ii. §. 1.

But by imposition, l. iii. ch. ii. §. 8.”

The former of these references spoke, no doubt, sufficiently for itself: but the latter needing perhaps some little elucidation, Mr. B. may have followed its friendly guidance, and opened accordingly on this passage, thus printed:

“§. 8. *Words* by long and familiar use, as has been said, come to excite in Men certain *Ideas* so constantly and readily, that they are apt to suppose a natural connection between them. But that they *signify* only Men’s peculiar *Ideas*, and that by a perfectly arbitrary *Imposition*, is evident,” &c.

The talismanic words “perfectly arbitrary *Imposition*,” were marked out at once by the Italics to the most rapid glance: and more was unnecessary;—to one, at least, who, previous to his occupation of “the Theological chair^b,” had at “College^c,” probably become better ac-

^a Lord Grenville, in his “Oxford and Locke,” has most amply vindicated Oxford, in the matter of Locke’s expulsion, as it has been called, from the University. Locke was Student of Christ Church: and his deprivation was the act neither of the University, nor of his College, but of the King (Charles II.) in his capacity of Visitor. The University had no cognizance of the matter; and the only part which the College had in it was, as the Dean and Canons thought themselves bound, to register and obey the Royal mandate. So far was Locke from thinking that he had any cause of resentment against Oxford, that, at his death, he bequeathed a copy of his works to the Library of the University.

The opinion, however, which Lord Grenville has expressed of the conduct of Bishop Fell, who was Dean of Christ Church when Locke was deprived, does not appear to be sufficiently borne out by the document on which he has founded it.

^b Calm Inquiry, p. v.

^c Ibid. p. ix.

quainted with the following passage of *Watts*: “*Words* (whether they are spoken or written,) *have no natural connexion with the ideas* they are designed to signify, nor with the things which are represented in those ideas. There is no manner of affinity between the sounds *white* in *English*, or *blanc* in *French*, and that colour which we call by that name; nor have the letters, of which these words are composed, any natural aptness to signify that colour rather than red or green. *Words and names* therefore are *mere arbitrary signs* invented by men to communicate their thoughts or ideas to one another.” *Logic*, part i. ch. iv. §. 1.

In this manner, it may be, Mr. Belsham learned, that when we loosely speak of “the natural signification of words and phrases,” we conceive some natural “affinity between the sounds” or words and “the ideas they are designed to signify,” or “the things which are represented in those ideas;” and that such a conception was not very well founded: for “words,” as the *Index* demonstrated, “*have no natural signification*,” but, “as the *Italics* made as clear as noon-day, *by a perfectly arbitrary Imposition*.” It was not prudent, indeed, to avow, formally, the inference which would at once present itself to the minds of “a certain class of metaphysicians^b;” but it was too clear, and too valuable to an enlightened theologian far advanced beyond vulgar prejudices, to forget: that we may *impose at will* on our own or on another’s words, whatever signification our purposes may require. As, however, “the natural signification of words and phrases” stood in the way, it was needful to get rid of it first; and this being once effected by a flourish of metaphysics, the privilege which I have just hinted at, would in due course tacitly and securely devolve upon “impartial and sincere inquirers after truth.”

Mr. Belsham, evidently, had no distinct apprehension.

^b First Prel. Diss. to Encycl. Brit. p. 143. 1835.

that when we speak of the natural signification of words, we mean no more than the signification which they have, according to the character of the language to which they belong, and to their ordinary and recognized use, and as opposed for instance to an anomalous or forced signification. No one contends that nature has instituted any connection between words and ideas: but, as Archbishop Magee observes, “the misfortune of a little knowledge is, that the phrases of a science are used without a perception of their import;” and Mr. Belsham,—probably in the way above described, or indeed, we may say almost certainly, from his use of the identical terms,—having learned that “words have no natural signification, but by a perfectly arbitrary Imposition,” made no distinction between the imposition of a meaning upon words, originally and afterwards.

It is perfectly true, that words, vocal or written, have not any natural connection with ideas: and they become representatives of ideas by a connection which, in the first instance, is discretionary or arbitrary, but when once recognized by common consent, “is so far from arbitrary, that nothing is more out of the power of individuals to alter. As Locke remarks,” but as Mr. Belsham did not observe, ‘even the great Augustus himself, in the possession of that power which ruled the world, acknowledged that he could not make a new Latin word: that is, says he, he could not arbitrarily appoint what idea any sound should be the sign of in the mouths and common language of his subjects.’ Not so the Unitarian Metaphysicians. They have read somewhere that ‘the connection between words and ideas is perfectly arbitrary;’ and mistaking the true meaning of the position, they are enabled by their ignorance, to accomplish what Augustus could not by his power, to give arbit-

trarily to words whatever signification they may choose."

Magee on the Atonement, vol. iii. pp. 3, 4. 1832.

NOTE 10.

Page 7. l. 3. *how important this difference is.*

Quare ut ad rem nostram proprius accedamus, concedimus quidem, Trinitatis cultores aliquo modo in erimen πολυθείας incidere, non tamen prorsus aut perfecta ratione. Quomodo incident partim ex superioribus colligi potest, partim alibi a nostris ostenditur. Cur vero eos dicamus non perfecte in hoc crimen incidere, causam quidem supra innuimus, sed tamen plenius ea res explicanda est. Primo ergo ideo pluralitatem Deorum non sunt censendi inferre perfecte, tum quod ipsi (licet falso) statuant, tres istas personas esse unius numero atque individuae essentiæ, inter personas autem illas, et quidem primo loco collocent eam quæ verus ac summus est Deus, cui etiam prærogativam quandam præ cæteris tribuunt; tum quod si rem ipsam spectemus, Christus Deo in imperio revera subordinatus sit, eatenus, cum Deo unum; Spiritus vero sanctus utrique insit, Deo quidem primum, consequentur etiam Christo, qui a Deo illius factus est particeps. Quare cum illi tam arctam istarum personarum statuant conjunctionem, quæ sua vi tanta est, ut personarum istarum diversitatem omnino excludat, (unde a nostris ostenditur dogma Trinitatis contradictionem involvere,) ac si rei veritatem spectes, arctissimus sit inter illas personas atque res nexus; pluralitas illa Deorum, quæ in ipsa sententia eorum continetur, perfecta non est. Deinde quod attinet ad illud, quod illi tres summos videantur statuere Deos, id ipsum quoque non perfecte ab ipsis statuitur, tum propter ea quæ modo diximus, tum propterea, quod Patri tamen semper prorogativam tri-

buant, cum eum divinitatis fontem ac principium, non nulli etiam causam vocent, eique tribuant, quod cum nec a quopiam sit genitus, nec processerit, ipse Filium genererit, et essentiam divinam ei communicaverit; ab ipsoque et Filio, vel ut Græci, ab ipso per Filium Spiritus sanctus procedat, quodque ipsi hanc præ reliquis personis autoritatem tribuant, quod cum hi mitti possint atque adeo etiam fuerint missi, solus Pater minime mitti queat. *Crellius; Eth. Christ. lib. iii. cap. 2. p. 308. fol. Irenopoli 1656.*

NOTE 11.

Page 27. l. 24. *one of the only two ways.*

See page 32, and Sermon III.

NOTE 12.

Page 37. l. 17. *They make natural religion, &c.*

Socinus, speaking of the Atonement, says: “Ego quidem, etiamsi non semel, sed sæpe id in sacris monimentis scriptum extaret; non idecirco tamen ita rem prorsus se habere crederem. *Opera, tom. ii. p. 204.*

And again writing of the seventh chapter of Romans, on which he maintained “Paulum, non de seipso, præsertim tanquam novo homine ac regenerato, loqui:” he says: “Certe contraria sententia adeo mihi et abunda, et perniciosa (pace Augustini, et ceterorum dixerim, qui unum ipsum potius, quam reliquos omnes imitari voluerunt) esse videtur, ut *quantacumque vis potius Pauli verbis sit adhibenda*, quam ea admittenda.” *Epist. II. ad Balcerovicium. Op. I. p. 425.*

NOTE 13.

Page 37. l. 19. *constitute their own reason, &c.*

— “if it (the doctrine of the Trinity) had been found in the Scripture, it would have been impossible for a reasonable man to believe it; as it implies a contradiction, which no miracles can prove.” *Priestley’s Hist. of Early Opin. Introd.* sect. iv. Works, vol. vi. pp. 33, 34.

“Though not satisfied with any interpretation of this extraordinary passage, (John vi. 62.) yet rather than believe our Saviour to have existed in any other state before the creation of the world, or to have left some state of great dignity and happiness when he came hither, I would have recourse to the old and exploded idea of Christ’s actual ascent into heaven, or of his imagining that he had been carried up thither in a vision; which, like that of St. Paul, he had not been able to distinguish from a reality: nay, I would not build an article of faith of such magnitude, on the correctness of John’s recollection and representation of our Lord’s language; and so strange and incredible does the hypothesis of a preexistent state appear, that, sooner than admit it, I would suppose the whole verse to be an interpolation, or that the old apostle dictated one thing, and his amanuensis wrote another.” (*Priestley’s Letters to Dr. Price*, pp. 57, 58, &c.)

NOTE 14.

Page 37. last line. *As Unipersonalist writers, &c.*

“— si aliqua in divinis monumentis loca reperirentur, ubi diserte scriptum extaret, Deum hominem factum fuisse, aut humanam carnem induisse vel assumpsisse, quod tamen, ut diximus, nunquam in eis traditum repieres, non statim ita, ut sonant, verba accipienda essent,

cum id divinæ majestati prorsus repugnet, sed ea ratione exponi deberent, ut per figuræ a loquendi usu non penitus abhorrentes, et aptior sententia nobis constaret, et ipsa natura funditus non everteretur.” *F. Socini de Christi Natura Disputatio.* Op. I. p. 784.

Smaleius, speaking of the Incarnation, says: “Credimus, etiamsi non semel atque iterum, sed satis crebro et dissertissime scriptum extaret Deum esse hominem factum, multo satius esse, quia hæc res sit absurdæ, et sanæ rationi plane contraria, et in Deum blasphemæ, modum aliquem dicendi comminisci, quo ista de Deo aliter dici possint, quam ista simpliciter ita ut verba sonant intelligere.” (*Homil. viii. ad cap. 1 Joh.*)

See also the previous note.

NOTE 15.

Page 40. l. 3. *conflicting variety of notions.*

“Qui vero Deos esse dixerunt, tanta sunt in varietate, ac dissensione, ut eorum molestum sit dinumerare sententias.” *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* l. i. c. 3.

“St. Austin somewhere out of Varro reckons up no less than two hundred and eighty opinions concerning that one question, what was the chief good or final happiness of man.” *Clarke’s Discourse on the obligations of Natural Religion, &c. in Watson’s Tracts,* vol. iv. p. 201.

NOTE 16.

Page 57. l. 9. *to the exclusion equally of reasoning and tradition.*

“Cum enim non instituto aliquo, aut more, aut lege sit opinio constituta, maneatque ad unum omnium firma consensio; intelligi necesse est, esse Deos, quoniam insitas eorum vel potius innatas cognitiones habemus.” *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* l. i. c. 17.

NOTE 17.

Page 75. l. 3. *of whose essence, &c.*

“ Of the substance of the Deity, we have no idea at all ; and, therefore, all that we can conceive or pronounce, concerning it, must be merely hypothetical.” *Priestley’s Disquisitions on Matter and Spirit.*

“ We know there must be a first cause, because things do actually exist, and could never have existed, without a cause, and all secondary causes necessarily lead us to a primary one. But of the nature of the existence of this primary cause, concerning which we know nothing but by its effects, we cannot have any conception. We are absolutely confounded, bewildered, and lost, when we attempt to speculate concerning it. This speculation is attended with insuperable difficulties. Every description of the Divine Being, in the New Testament, gives us an idea of something filling and penetrating all things, and therefore of no known mode of existence.” *Ibid.* p. 111, 146.

“ It must be confessed with awful reverence, that we know but little of ourselves, and therefore much less of our Maker, even with respect to his attributes. We know but little of the works of God, and therefore much less of his Essence. In fact, we have no proper idea of any essence whatever. It will hardly be pretended, that we have any proper idea of the substance even of matter, considered as divested of all its properties.” *Ibid.* p. 103, 104.

NOTE 18.

Page 93. l. 3. *no more than a sinful man.*

“ The Unitarian doctrine is, that Jesus of Nazareth was a man constituted in ALL respects like other men,

*subject to the same infirmities, the same ignorance, PREJUDICES and FRAILTIES—descended from the family of David, the son of Joseph and Mary, though some indeed still adhere to the popular opinion of the miraculous conception—*** that he was a man of exemplary character,” &c. Belsham’s *Calm Inquiry*, pp. 447, 448.*

“ The moral character of Christ, through the whole course of his *public* ministry, *as recorded by the Evangelists*, is pure and unimpeachable in every particular.

“ Whether this perfection of character in *public* life, combined with the general declarations of his freedom from sin, establish, or were intended to establish, the fact, that Jesus through the whole course of his PRIVATE life was *completely exempt from all the errors and failings of human nature*, is a question of NO GREAT INTRINSIC MOMENT, and concerning which we have no sufficient data to lead us to a satisfactory conclusion^a. ” *Ibid.* p. 190.

“ The Unitarians maintain, that *Jesus* and his apostles were supernaturally instructed *as far as was necessary* for the execution of their commission, that is, for the revelation and proof of the *doctrine* of eternal life, and that the favour of God extended to the Gentiles equally with the Jews; and that *Jesus* and his apostles, and others of the primitive believers, were *occasionally* inspired to foretel future events. But they believe that supernatural inspiration was *limited to these cases alone*; and that when *Jesus* or his apostles delivered opinions upon subjects unconnected with the object of their mission, such opinions, and their reasonings upon them,

^a These are Mr. Belsham’s remarks on the following passages amongst others which he had cited on the moral character of Christ: “ He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin :” 2 Cor. v. 21.—“ who was holy, harmless, *undefiled*, and *separate from sinners* :” Heb. vii. 26. “ who did no sin :” 1 Pet. ii. 22. “ in him was no sin :” 1 John iii. 5.

are to be received with *the same attention and CAUTION* with those of *other* persons in similar circumstances, of similar education, and with similar habits of thinking.” *Ibid.* pp. 451, 452.

The above needs no comment.

NOTE 19.

Page 126. *The Angel of the Lord, and the Angel of God.*

See McCaul’s translation of Rabbi D. Kimchi’s Commentary on Zechariah. Diss. appended to Chap. I.

NOTE 20.

Page 141. l. 6. ‘*Unto us a Child is born,*’ &c.

See an able Sermon on this text by the late Professor Nicoll. Sermons, Oxford, 1830.

NOTE 21.

Page 145. l. 18. *the man who is my fellow.*

“ That *עמי* ‘my fellow,’ implies that He of whom it is spoken is a divine person, is plainly acknowledged by those rabbies who oppose Christianity. R. Isaac says, ‘He calls him, *The man, my fellow,* and companion, because in the pride and haughtiness of his heart he thinks himself as it were God.’ And Abarbanel, who endeavours to interpret the words in a bad sense of our Lord, acknowledges still more plainly that these words signify one of the same substance. ‘The words, *The man my fellow*, are spoken of Jesus the Nazarene, for, according to the sentiments of the children of Edom, and their faith, he was the Son of God, and of the same substance, and therefore he is called according to their words, *The man that is my fellow.* He here plainly and positively asserts, that these words express the Christian

doctrine of the Deity of Messiah, and thinks that they were selected on that account. These two testimonies of two controversialists, writing professedly against Christianity, are of the greatest value. They shew that the grammatical sense assigned to the passage by Christians, and on which Christians rest their interpretation, is so obvious, and so necessarily true, that the most acute adversaries are compelled to admit it; and can only escape from it by saying that the words are ironical. This concession is rendered doubly valuable by the consideration, that they had before them another explanation, proposed by a rabbi of great renown, and that they rejected it. Rashi, as quoted by Kimchi in the Commentary, says, that kings are called God's fellows, because they are associated with him in feeding his sheep; but R. Isaac and Abarbanel preferred expounding ‘עמיתִי’ ‘my fellow,’ of a similarity in nature and substance; and, no doubt, their reason for this preference was the fact, that, in all the other passages where it occurs, it can have no other meaning. Except in this passage, it only occurs in the Pentateuch as follows: Levit. v. 20. (English, vi. 2.) Lev. xviii. 20. xix. 11, 15, 17. xxiv. 19. xxv. 14. These are the only places where it occurs, and in all these it is synonymous with brother, or fellow. It expresses the relation of fellow-Israelite, or fellow-man, and points out an identity of nature.”—“When, therefore, God calls any being ‘עמיתִי’ ‘my fellow,’ it necessarily implies that that being stands in the same relation to God as one Israelite or man does to another; that is, that he is of the same nature or substance; that is, that he is very God.” *Rabbi David Kimchi's Commentary upon the Prophecies of Zechariah, translated from the Hebrew, with Notes, &c. by the Rev. A. McCaul, A.M. of Trinity College, Dublin.*

NOTE 22.

Page 165. l. 20. *to the name.*

“ We hear but, in nomine, but of one name. Now as the Apostle reasoneth (Gal. iii. 16.) Abrahæ dictæ sunt promissiones, &c. to Abraham and his seed, were the promises made; he saith not to the seeds, as of many, but to his seed, as of one. So we are baptized, non in nominibus, quasi multis; sed in nomine, quasi uno; not in the names as of many, but in the name as of one: one name, and one nature or essence.” *Bishop Andrews’ Sermons*, p. 642.

NOTE 23.

Page 173. l. 18. *the only ones from the New Testament.*

On 1 John v. 7. the reader is referred to “ A Vindication of the Literary Character of the late Professor Porson, by Crito Cantabrigiensis.” (It is very much to be desired, that the learned and excellent author of this work would gratify the public with his long promised “ Review of the Controversy between Bishop Horsley and Dr. Priestley.”)

NOTE 24.

Page 178. l. 8. *with the utmost consistency.*

Our Saviour’s condescending to afford him additional evidence, is a decisive proof that there was no perverseness or wilfulness in the apostle’s unbelief.

NOTE 25.

Page 179. l. 23. *definition of religious worship.*

“ Religious worship is homage, mental or verbal, addressed to an *invisible* being, who is supposed to be

capable of attending to such addresses, and to possess a voluntary power of doing good or evil to the worshipper.” *Belsham, Calm Inq.* p. 349. According to this definition, there can be no religious worship where God is seen “face to face.”

NOTE 26.

Page 180. l. 1. *conjectures altogether unfounded in some cases, and in others at variance with fact.*

1. Mr. Belsham represents Stephen, when he “invoked and said, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” to have had “a visible perception of the real presence of Christ;” (*Calm Inq.* p. 373.) and, 2. he adduces Luke xxiv. 51, 52. “While He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven: and they worshipped Him;” as an instance of merely civil respect or “external homage” paid to Christ as “sensibly present.”

NOTE 27.

Page 180. l. 14. “*the works that I do.*”

The believer was to do the *same* works, and *greater* also.

NOTE 28.

Page 211. l. 9. *altogether distinct.*

Though, judging from the different capacities of different men, we cannot say what are the limits of the human intellect; it must be admitted by all, who conceive omniscience to be, as it is, a proof of Godhead, that the human intellect cannot become omniscient. Nor can the Divine become ignorant. And though, whether personally united in Christ, or personally separated, as in God and men; the Divine can communicate to the

human intellect that limited knowledge which it is capable of receiving; yet that the communication is voluntary, not necessary, as it is never doubted in the latter case, so is it equally indubitable, on due reflection, in the former. The personal union of two substances does not involve a necessary intercommunication of their respective properties. In the personal union of matter and spirit in the same man, there is indeed an influence of the one on the other, but no intercommunication of their respective properties. The hand or the body is not the mind; though, at the will of the mind, it will execute its purposes: and *vice versâ*. Had a personal union necessarily involved such an intercommunication, Christ could not have died.

The communication, therefore, of knowledge to the human intellect of Christ being voluntary; it was altogether suitable to that state of abasement to which He condescended, and in which He “emptied Himself” for our sakes, that He should not, as man, instantaneously receive *all* that knowledge which, in this respect, He could receive; but that, likening Himself to “His brethren,” and affording us an example of a holy life in all the stages of our earthly existence, He should “increase in wisdom and knowledge,” and be, at the period in which He avowed Himself, ignorant of the day even of His own coming. He was not yet glorified, and, doubtless, He reserved the full communication of all knowledge, possible to His human nature, until the time when He should take His seat at the right hand of the Father.

NOTE 29.

Page 250. l. 5. *He does not say one person.*

I am indebted to Mr. Faber's work^d for the following extract from Augustine. “Audi, quomodo credas Patrem et Filium. Audi ipsum Filium: *Ego et Pater unum sumus.* Non dixit: *Pater ego sum:* aut *Ego et Pater unum est.* Sed, cum dixit; *Ego et Pater unum sumus:* utrumque audi, et *UNUM* et *SUMUS;* et a Charybdi et a Scylla liberaberis. In duobus istis verbis, quod dixit *UNUM,* liberat te ab Ario: quod dixit *SUMUS,* liberat te a Sabellio. Si *UNUM;* non, ergo, *diversum:* Si *SUMUS;* ergo, *et Pater et Filius.* *SUMUS,* enim, non diceret de uno: sed et *unum* non diceret de *diversis.*” *Augustin. in Johan. Tract. xxxvi. Oper. vol. ix. p. 99.*

NOTE 30.

Page 269. l. 14. *symbolizes with the creed of Mohammed.*

The Unitarians, in fact, descend lower in the scale of heresy, than the Mahometans; inasmuch as they deny, while the Mahometans admit, that Christ was born of a Virgin. “The Mahometans agree in part with the milder sect” (of the Ebionites, whom the Unitarians claim as the prototype of their own body,) “which believed that Christ was born of a virgin^e; that he, no less than Moses, was a great teacher and prophet, that he was the Messiah predicted by the prophets, and that he had received a commission from God to reform and instruct the world^f; but that he was only a man.

^d Vol. ii. pp. 88, 89.

^e “In the Alcoran he is always called the Son of *Mary.*”

^f Let this be compared with the Unitarians' account of our Saviour's commission, as given in the extracts from Mr. Belsham, Note 18.

“ If, therefore, their (the Ebionites) opinions are to be considered as the standard of Christianity,” (which the *Unitarians* maintain they *are*,) “ the different nations of Mahometans are unquestionably truer Christians (as far as doctrines are concerned in constituting our religion) than the greater part of that body of mankind, to which this name has been exclusively annexed; and, instead of projecting their conversion, Christians themselves ought to be converted to the Christianity of the Turks. The author of *Nazarenus* (Toland)— * * * — after having described the *Christianity* and the Gospel of the *Mahometans*, characterized both in a short summary in these words. ‘ ’Tis in short the ancient *Ebionite* or *Nazarene* system; and agrees in every thing almost with the scheme of our modern Unitarians. It is not, I believe, without sufficient grounds, that I have represented them (the Mahometans) as a sort of Christians; and not the worst sort neither, though far from being the best.’’ *Wilson’s Illustration of the method of explaining the New Testament by the early opinions of Jews and Christians concerning Christ.* Camb. 1797. Svo. pp. 294, 295^g.

Toland was an unbeliever; and as, on *Dr. Priestley’s* testimony, an unbeliever “ cannot be far from Unitarians^h,” Toland’s opinion must have some claims on their attention and respect.

^g This Work is little known; but it possesses, in my opinion, at least equal merit with Bishop Horsley’s valuable Tracts. It is very rarely to be met with; and a reprint of it would, I have no doubt, be well received.

^h “ In a letter to Mr. Lindsey, concerning Mr. Jefferson,” (President of the United States of America,) “ Dr. Priestley uses these words: ‘ He is generally considered as an unbeliever: if so, however, HE CANNOT BE FAR FROM US.’ *Magee on the Atonement*, vol. iii. p. 332. Lond. 1832, quoting from the *Panoplist* of Dr. Morse, entitled *Socinianism unmasked*, pp. 41, 45. Mr. Belsham, also,

A more unexceptionable evidence, however, of the affinity between the doctrines of the Unitarians and Mahometans, is found in “an Epistle Dedicatory,” from the Unitarians themselves, “to his Illustrious Excellency Ameth Ben Ameth, Embassador of the Mighty Emperor of Fez and Morocco, to Charles II. King of Great Britain.” This “Epistle” is given at full length by Leslie in his Works, vol. i. p. 207. fol. 1721. And if any one should be inclined to doubt its genuineness, he will find sufficient to remove all doubt in Bishop Horsley’s Tracts; Letter xvi. Postscript.

NOTE 31.

Page 269. l. 23. *eighteen places of the Old Testament, and two from the New.*

- No. 1. Gen. iii. 5. Ye shall be as Gods.
- 2. Exod. vii. 1. I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.
- 3. —— xv. 11. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?
- 4. —— xxi. 6. His master shall bring him unto the Judges,—*Elohim*; literally, the gods.
- 5. —— xxii. 8. Brought unto the Judges, *Elohim*.
- 6. 9. The Judges, *Elohim*.
- 7. Ditto.
- 8. 28. Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.

in his “Review of Mr. Wilberforce’s Treatise,” p. 203, is not “ashamed even to avow, that, of the two, he would rather approach the confines of cold and cheerless scepticism, than the burning zone of merciless orthodoxy.”

9. Deut. x. 17. God of gods.
10. Judges xiii. 22. We have seen God.
11. 1 Sam. ii. 25. The judge (Elohim) shall judge him.
12. xxviii. 13. I saw gods.
13. Psalm viii. 5. Angels, Elohim.
14. lxxxii. 1. Among the gods.
15. 6. I said, Ye are gods.
16. lxxxvi. 8. Among the gods there is none like thee.
17. xcvi. 7. Worship Him, all ye gods.
18. 9. Above all gods.

NEW TEST.

1. John x. 35. If he called them gods.
2. 1 Cor. viii. 5. Though there be that are called gods.

That the Greek and Hebrew words for god, are not used invariably in the same manner, and in the same signification, is seen in the case of Nos. 13 and 17; where the Hebrew is rendered both by the LXXII, and by St. Paul, not by Θεός, but by ἀγγελος.

In No. 1, Elohim is used for the true God; as we see in the twenty-second verse; “Behold the man is become as one of us.”

In Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, it is also used most probably for the true God. He was the King and the Judge of Israel. The government was administered in His name, and carried on by His own immediate interference. He was conceived to be personally present in judgments; and we know that causes were often submitted by lot or otherwise to His decision. The LXXII. therefore renders Exod. xxi. 6, not amiss by πρὸς τὸ κριτήριον τοῦ Θεοῦ; xxii. 8, 9, by ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ; and in the second instance of the ninth verse, it has, καὶ ὁ

ἀλοὺς διὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ. Or if it seem preferable that these places should be understood of the “judges;” even then God is represented as standing and judging amongst them^g: and the places come under the same head with Nos. 14 and 15, and are involved in the same decision. No. 9 comes under the same head.

In No. 11, the English is a mistranslation:—it should be “God shall judge him:”—while in No. 10 the English is correct.

In Nos. 3, 16, and 18, Elohim is used, as it frequently is, for *false gods*. In No. 12, we have the words merely of the terror stricken witch, who was as likely to believe the apparition to be the true God come to punish her wickedness, as she was to imagine it to be any other being.

No. 2 is considered in the sequel of the Sermon.

It would take up much more room than the limits of this work would allow, to examine each of these texts in detail: but I conceive, that all that can be said upon them by the Unitarians is met in the remaining part of this Sermon.

NOTE 32.

Page 339. *Polyarp.*

Mr. Waddington, professing to “transcribe his last beautiful prayer,” concludes it thus: “For this and for every thing, I praise thee, I bless thee, I glorify thee, through the eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son.” *Hist. of the Church*, part i. ch. 1. (4.)

It is true, that the doxology of Polycarp, according to Eusebius, was in this form: “I glorify thee, through the eternal High Priest Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son,

^g Psalm lxxxii. 1.

through whom be glory to thee WITH HIM in the Holy Ghost, both now and for evermore.” But this comes to the same thing with the doxology as I have quoted it in the Sermon: and the slight difference hardly affords any excuse to an author professing to “*transcribe* the prayer,” to leave out one of its most important parts without notice.

NOTE 33.

Page 374. l. 15. *not damnatory.*

I mean that they are not damnatory, in that vulgar sense of the word, in which it is used to the prejudice of the Creed. Condemnatory of not keeping the faith, they are: but so far are they from being damnatory in the ill sense of the word, that they are intended to *save* from damnation by timely warning, instead of “dooming” to it. They admonish us of the extreme peril of apostacy from the Christian faith, by the abandonment or corruption of its chief doctrines: and therefore instead of being “damnatory,” they are most charitable.

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CORRIGENDA.

In the last reference, page 158. For “Zohar” read “Rabbi Simeon B. Jochai:” and in the first reference on the following page, read “Id. apud Maium (J. H.) Synop. Theol. Jud.” &c.

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